The Sincere

Popiſh Convert:

Or, a brief Account of the

REASONS

WHICH

Induced a Perſon who was ſome Years ſince ſeduced to the *ROMISH CHURCH*, to relinquiſh Her Communion, and return into the Boſom of the *Church of England*.

WHEREIN THE

Holy Scriptures

Are clearly proved to contain all things which are neceſſary to be *Believed* and *Practiced* by Chriſtians, in order to their *Salvation*; and are juſtly Vindicated from thoſe odious Imputations, which the *Papiſts* profanely caſt upon them.

WITH

An *Epiſtle* to the Reverend and Learned Dr. *Stillingfleet*, Dean of St. *Paul's*.

I verily thought with my ſelf, that I ought to do many things contrary to the Name of Jeſus of Nazareth, Act. 26. 9.

He is not joyned to the Church, who is departed from the Goſpel. S. Cypr. de Lapſis.

(T. S.)

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(T. S.)

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TO THE

Right Reverend and Honourable

HENRY

LORD

BISHOP of *LONDON*,

Dean of His Majesties Chapel, and one of his most Honourable Privy Council.

My Lord,

I Have some Years since met with a Prophecy (and many talk of such things at this Time) which may yield a little Comfort in this *Day of our Visitation.* The Original it self I have not seen: but it is taken out of *Telesphorus de Tribulat.* and thus cited by Dr. *John White*: *Antichristus non poterit subjugare* Venetias, *nec* Parisios, *nec Civitatem Regalem* Angliæ.

The Memorable Baffle that the *Venetians* gave to *Paul* the Fifth; the frequent Picqueering of the *Sorbon* with the same See, may in part *Justifie:* But the Wonderful Preservations, both Antient and Modern, of this Kingdom and *Metropolis*, from the Restless At-

tempts of many of that Faction, will, I hope, Evince its *Probability.*

How Inſtrumental your Lordſhip hath been towards that Security and Happineſs we yet Enjoy, how Indefatigable your Pains, how Undaunted your Courage in the moſt Critical Conjunctures, is with Gratitude and Applauſe proclaimed to the World, not only by your own Large and Numerous Flock, but by the Loud Acclamations of the Whole Nation. And though I never was ſo fortunate as to be an Eye-witneſs of thoſe Heroick Vertues which daily Influence Your Charge, rendring You ſo Amiable to the Churches Friends, and at the ſame time ſo Formidable to her Enemies: yet that Univerſal Character which is every where given of You, engages me to look on you as no leſs than a Perſon in whom Concentre thoſe Requiſites, which ſome Criticks in Morality (how juſtly I diſpute not) have exacted to make up a Compleat Chriſtian. They are theſe: *The Orthodox Faith and Loyalty of a true* Engliſh Proteſtant; *the Zeal and Good Works of a* Roman-Catholick; *the Gratious Words and Painful Preaching of a* Puritan. And all theſe Inculcated by your Life, as well as Injunctions on your moſt Learned and Religious Clergy.

But I muſt remember my ſelf at the *Judges Barr*, and not at the *Heralds Office*; and that this Paper attends You as a *Petition*, and not as a *Panegyrick*. Your moſt Gracious Approbation of my Deſires (intimated to you by the Reverend Dean of St. *Pauls*) *Invites*

the

the one; as Your undoubted Worth and Honour *Extorts* the other.

Vouchſafe then, my Lord, to Accept into the Arms of your Noble Charity what is penn'd purely with a Spirit of Charity. They are ſuch Reflexions as Reclaimed my ſelf, and may, with Gods bleſſing, contribute to the Reducing of ſome others, as unwarily mis-led as I was.

To which purpoſe, I endeavour Brevity and Perſpicuity: deſigning this Diſcourſe for the Vulgar, (the Learned have richer Mines to recurr to) and therefore waving that Accurateneſs of Method and Expreſſion, which Your Lordſhips Judicious Eye may expect; but neither my Intent, the preſent Affliction I lye under, the unſettledneſs of my Affairs, nor Abſence from my Books (all which afford not that *Tranquillum Scribentis & otia*) will admit.

However, when all *Athens* was Buſie and in Motion, the *Cynick* for Company would needs rowl about his Tub. And, if ſo obſcure a Perſon as my ſelf, intrude into the Crowd of thoſe Many Able *Contenders for the Faith once delivered to the Saints*, which daily almoſt appear upon the Stage; I have St. *Auguſtines* Advice for my Apology. *De Trinit. l.* 3. *c.* 3. *In places infected with Hereſie, all men ſhould write, that have any faculty therein, though it were the ſame thing in other words: that all ſorts of People, among many Books, might light upon ſome; and the Enemy in all places might find one or other to encounter him.*

Be-

Besides, I thought this the best Expedient, Publickly to testifie my Sincere Re-union to that Church in which I received my Baptism and Education; and how faithfully I am, and resolve by Gods Grace to continue,

My Lord,

Your Lordships most Humble
and Obedient Servant

T. S.

AN

AN EPISTLE

From a Late

Roman Catholick

To the Very Reverend

Dr. *EDWARD STILLINGFLEET*

Dean of St. *Pauls*, *&c.*

Very Reverend and Honoured Sir,

THough I am not altogether Ignorant of your Perſon, yet my chief Acquaintance is with thoſe Learned Works of Yours, (the beſt Repreſentative) wherewith you have enriched this Age, obliged the Church of England, and (I ſpeak it experimentally) given the greateſt Satisfaction to ingenious Minds, that ſober and unaffected Reaſon (I do not mean ſuch ſtuff as Mr. White's and Mr. Serjeant's Demonſtrations) can poſſibly perform.

And thus, Sir, I have been your moſt intimate Friend and Servant theſe ſeven or eight years.

All which ſpace I have been a very attentive Spectator of your famous Encounters, and to my Comfort ſeen ſingle Truth and modeſt Reaſon combate with whole Troops of Old, Subtle, Confident, Cholerick, and I may add, Malicious Adverſaries, And I hope I ſhall have Cauſe to bleſs God to all Eternity, and thank you for ſo Glorious a Sight. But before I return my full Acknowledgments to you, I muſt crave Leave to give you a Short but True Narrative: only be pleaſed not to believe it (as you ſtyle Mr. Creſſey's) a Legend of my ſelf.

I had my Education in one of the chiefeſt Free-Schooles in London, under the Care of a very able Inſtructor, and by him was fitted for the Univerſity. But about a year before my advancing thither, it happen'd that an ancient Gentleman came frequently to divert himſelf in a Walk that was near the School, and ſo took Occaſion to diſcourſe with divers of the Lads: I being the Head of the School at that time, he pretended a particular Complacency (though I know not why) in my ſelf. He never conferred about any Point in Religion, but ſtill entertained me with ſpeaking Latin, which he did very fluently and politely: and his conſtant Diſcourſe was about the rare Method of Education uſed beyond Sea, the great Number of their Students, the Diligence of their Tutors, the Exactneſs of their Diſci-

Diſcipline, and much more to the like Effect. What this Converſation would have produced at laſt, I know not. But the chief Maſter of the School perceiving me often with him, at laſt forbad me his Company, and told me he ſhrewdly ſuſpected the Gentleman to be a Jeſuit. And I remember he inſtanced in ſome particular ſlie wayes thoſe Perſons uſed to Intice and Spirit away Youths, whom they judged fit for their Employment.

So this Correſpondence broke off, and I never had more to do with him. However I muſt confeſs that much of his Diſcourſe did recoil upon my Childiſh Fancy a long time after. And though within a ſhort while I went to Cambridge, *viz. in the year* 1658. *yet my mind was not quiet: and thoſe ſtupendous Diſtractions both of Church and State that immediately followed, did infinitely add to my Perplexity.*

Then happen'd his Majeſty's happy Reſtauration: which being as it were a year of Jubilee, no wonder if the younger ſort of the Univerſity did take the Benefit of the Indulgence: I mean Indulgere Genio, *and uſe ſome Liberties, which at other times the ſtrictneſs of an Academical Life would not have permitted. Here likewiſe I acknowledge I ſwam with the Stream, and did not ſo ſeriouſly mind thoſe Affairs I was deſigned for by my Friends, and ſo fell into thoſe Inconveniencies, which, not long after my having proceeded Batchelor of Art, induced me to leave the Univerſity.*

Coming up to London I light into the Company of an ancient Acquaintance, and among other Diſcourſes we at laſt fell upon Religion. The Gentlewoman adjured mee by no ſmall Conſiderations to adviſe well what I fix'd upon, and likewiſe to recurr to ſome able Perſon of her Perſwaſion, which was that of the Roman-Catholicks.

Hereupon I was introduced to one of the moſt Grave, Subtle, and Acute Fathers then in the Nation (one whoſe Works I perceive you are not wholly a Stranger to,) I mean F. Fran. à S. Clara: *with whoſe winning diſcourſe I was extreamly taken, and to whoſe extraordinary Civilities I muſt always account my ſelf extraordinarily obliged.*

You cannot be long in Suſpenſe concerning the Iſſue of this Interview. He who had triumphed over ſo many Perſons of Honour and Quality, Clergy and Laity, (witneſs among the reſt, Dr. G. Biſhop of Glouceſter) *might eaſily baffle ſuch a young Stripling as my ſelf, and ſoon dazle my Eyes with the glittering Pretenſes of* Infallibility, Antiquity, Unity, Univerſality, Succeſſion, Councils, Fathers, Saints, Miracles, Religious Orders, *&c. Theſe, with the Example of ſeveral learned men, Converts of our own Nation, as* Dr. Baily, Vane, Carrier, Creſſey, Walſingham, Montague, Craſhaw, *with many others yet living and therefore nameleſs, were, I then thought, too great a* Cloud of Witneſſes *for my ſingle Wit either to oppoſe or ſo much as queſtion.*

And now, Sir, you may eaſily gueſs what became of me. For about nine or ten years I was wholly immured up, forced to comply with and ſwallow every thing; durſt not propoſe any Scruples for fear of being ſuſpected Heretically inclined,

ned. And thus I continued till the latter end of the year 1671. *At which time, by Gods great Mercy I got ſome reſpite to reflect upon what I had done in revolting from the Church of* England, *and engaging with one, the ignorance of whoſe Proſelytes is often made Uſe of for ſomething more than bare Devotion.*

Since that Time, I take God to witneſs, I have moſt impartially ſurvey'd all the ſeveral Writers I could procure on both ſides; but eſpecially your own Books, Dr. Tillotſon's, *and* Dr. Lloyd's. *(To both whom, I beſeech you, in my name to tender my moſt humble Thanks for that Great Satisfaction I have reaped by their Writings, eſpecially* The Rule of Faith.*) And, I aſſure you, I found the* Infallible Principles *ſo ſhaken by thoſe Solid and Learned Treatiſes, and my ſelf ſo intrigued by my own Experience of the Juggling Practices of ſome Perſons moſt cryed up for Perfection, that neither* Father Bellarmine *(for as you well obſerve, amidſt that great boaſt that is made of Fathers, He is the* Great Father *with moſt of our Neoterick Controvertiſts) nor* Dr. T. G. *nor* Mr. Creſſey, *nor* Mr. Serjeant himſelf, *who ſpeaks nothing but* Scientifical Oracles, *could* Unblunder *my thoughts: (that I may not wholly forſake the Rhetorick of my old Friends.)*

And this hath been the true ſtate of my Soul for ſeveral years, juſt like S. James's *Ἀνὴρ Δίψυχος, unconſtant in his wayes. For, what with the Terrour of that Theological Scare-crow, Schiſm, on the one hand; with the Flattery of an acknowledged poſſibility of Salvation in the* Roman *Church on the other (though the Dean of* Canterbury's *Sermon on that Subject hath now perfectly cleared me) I was ſtill detained in a Communion with that Church, which I conceived to hold all the Fundamentals of Chriſtianity. To which (to acknowledge ſomething of Humane frailty) I may add the Advantages I enjoyed, and the Damages I ſhould unavoidably incurr, by quitting a Party, whoſe Inveterate and Implacable Malice towards a Deſerter, though upon the ſtrongeſt Convictions of Conſcience, is ſufficiently known, and particularly taken notice of by the afore-mentioned Reverend and Learned Author, in his Diſcourſe on that of the Goſpel,* There is joy in Heaven over one Sinner, &c. *and I my ſelf have already begun to experienſe from ſome, from whom I neither expected nor deſerved it. To omit that Innate Reluctancy, well nigh in All, of Recanting a Committed Errour. Though theſe were but Difficulties of the* Second Rate.

Yet at laſt thoſe Deſperate Practices whereof many of that Party ſtand ſuſpected, and ſome indicted, made me reſolve to break through all Obſtacles, and publickly declare my Deteſtation of their Actions, by Renouncing their Communion, and Proteſting againſt thoſe Principles and Doctrines (as is evident in the moſt General Council of Lateran, *and others, ſeconded by the undeniable Practice of many Popes, in Actual* Depoſing *of Princes, and* Diſpoſing *of Kingdoms) which, it is to be feared, had but too much Influence on ſuch Traiterous Deſigns.*

This Tenent of a Foreign Power, either Direct in Spirituals, or Indirect in Temporals, is moſt manifeſtly inconſiſtent with the Peace and Safety of our Engliſh *Nation; and till it be* Renounced *or* Diſabled, *we ſhall never be free from* Jealouſies *and* Fears.

There is another Point of as Fatal Conſequence to Common Converſation, as the former to the Publick Government, and that is the Trick of Equivocation, *or* Refined Art of Lying. *I will not ſay it is a Doctrine of the* Roman *Church; but I know it to be both the Doctrine and Practice of a Leading Party in that Church; and never, as I ever yet heard of, was it yet Cenſured by the Church it ſelf; no more than the Depoſing Doctrine, and other ſuch like Helliſh Maxims have been diſowned.*

Of this Latter I had a famous Inſtance not long ſince: A known Jeſuit being apprehended in a Neighbouring Town, upon the Interrogatories put to him by the Magiſtrate, he denied himſelf to be a Prieſt, proteſted he was a Married man, had Wife and Children. And all this was ſalved by that pittiful Evaſion (you know the ſhift of the Crucifix in the Sleeve uſed at China) That his Breviary was his Wife, and his Penitents his Spiritual Children. *This was a very great Scandal to all that heard of it, both* Proteſtants *and* Romaniſts; *and for my own part, I was ſo Concerned in it, that I writ expreſly to my old Learned Friend* F. Fran. à S. Clara, *to be ſatisfied. Who, quite contrary to my Expectation (and which hath much diminiſhed the Eſteem I had for him) gave me this Anſwer in Writing; That he had done nothing amiſs, nor misbeſeeming an Honeſt man. Nay then, thought I, the Good Lord open our Eyes! And, to deal plainly with you, from that very Moment I have been very much unſatisfied, whether the* Roman Principles *be ſafe to* Dye in: *much leſs to Ruin Eſtates, and* Dye for.

Thus, Sir, being very timorous of diverting your many Weighty Employments, I have given you a Cleer, Faithful, and Succinct Account of my ſelf. And ſo now, Laqueus contritus eſt, &c. *The Snare is broken, and we are eſcaped. My remaining Buſineſs is, as ſpeedily as I can procure it, to be received into the Boſome of my antient Mother the Church of* England, *whom with unfeigned Contrition of heart, I acknowledge to have forſaken before I throughly underſtood: and purpoſe, by Gods help, to Evidence to the World, that I have far more Conſiderable Motives to return, than I had to Wander. And though I ſhall not make ſuch a noiſe as Thoſe who have Publiſhed* Exomologeſes, Challenges, &c. *yet I hope I ſhall make it appear, that the Change I now make, is done upon the matureſt Deliberation, back'd by the moſt earneſt Imploring of the Divine Aſſiſtance.*

About five years ſince, it was my hap, at the Inſtance of a Perſon of Quality, who had Conſiderable Sums to Diſpoſe of, to publiſh a Small Tract entituled, The Caſe of Intereſt, or Uſury, as to the Common Practice, examined in a Letter to the ſame Perſon. *It is the onely Piece I ever yet penn'd: and I mention it, that if you pleaſe you may perceive, that I alwayes proceeded upon Principles of Honeſty, Conſcience, and Moderation; and even then had an Honourable Regard for the Church of* England. *But, Good Lord! what Outcries were then made againſt it by the Jeſuitical Party, who look'd on it as purpoſely written to affront their Trade! what Excommunications threaten'd by others! So you may eaſily foreſee what I am to expect, when I diſingage my ſelf of the Promiſe I juſt now made*

made you. But a Good God, a Good Cauſe, and a Good Conſcience, will, I queſtion not, carry me through all.

It is no ſmall Comfort to me, when I think how that Vaſt Wit, Mr. Chillingworth, *could not eſcape thoſe very Snares that I have been entangled with. And I preſume it may ſerve as an Apology for the Slips and Failings of my Weak Intellectuals, when ſuch a Great Maſter of Reaſon as He, was for a time led Captive. Yet at laſt, he moſt happily Diſcovered and Proved* The Proteſtant Religion a Safe way to Salvation.

Thoſe whom I forſake have a Tradition (as indeed they have too many) That none ever Retire from their Communion, but they preſently become depraved in their Morals. (If they mean the Jeſuits Morals, it is no great Matter) I have no wayes to Confute them fully, but as Diogenes *did* Zeno, *by Walking*: viz. with a Conſcience void of Offence both towards God and Man. *And if they ſhall, after their Charitable Method, think to beſpatter me for any thing paſt; I have ſuch Publick, Authentick and Late Teſtimonies under Hand and Seal from the Chief among them, of my Comportment (though I will not diſown the Allayes of Common Frailties and Imperfections) that ſhall be able to Silence the moſt Impudent Calumny.*

But I fear I have already treſpaſſed upon your Patience; and I muſt referr what elſe I had to propoſe, till ſuch time I am ſo happy (and truly till then, I ſhall neither be happy nor ſatisfied) as to ſee you. Many Doubts I have to Object, fitter to be committed to a Ghoſtly Father's Ear, than to Paper: and many Particulars there are, wherein I may perhaps gratifie your own Curioſity. But, having been ſo long a Romaniſt, *and being ſtill a Reputed one, I ſhould be loth that Diſobedience to Royal Proclamations (however they have been ſlighted by ſome) ſhould be the firſt fruits of my Converſion. And therefore I muſt patiently attend that good hour, when I may ſatisfie both my Obedience and my Inclinations together.*

In your Conference with Sir P. T. *and Mr.* Coleman *(that Wretched man, who, had he meddled with nothing but what he then pretended himſelf ſo deſirous to be reſolved in, had never come to that ſad Cataſtrophe) you expreſs ſo much Candour, Meekneſs, Chriſtian Zeal and Charity for Satisfying thoſe Diſſenters, who in reality did nothing but ſhuffle with you; that it emboldens me to Addreſs a Requeſt to you (beſides my Thanks, which moſt Cordially I do by theſe Preſents.)* viz. *That becauſe I apprehend Danger from ſome of thoſe I relinquiſh, having already taſted a little of their kindneſs that way; and becauſe I would not long remain in an Unfix'd, Neutral poſture; you would be pleaſed to procure leave that I might come up to* London, *where I may attend you, and both Give and Receive all deſired Satisfaction poſſible. I know you ſo Eminent, that you may procure a Licenſe. This would Complete my Felicity: and as for your own Reward, beſides the Complacency you take in the very Performance of ſuch Charitable Offices, I can but referr you to that of St.* James, cap. & v. ult. Brethren, if any of you do err from the Truth, and one Convert him: Let him know, that

he who converteth a Sinner from the Error of his wayes, ſhall ſave a Soul from Death, and ſhall hide a multitude of Sins.

There is one Cavil I muſt needs remove, and it is this: How chances this Change juſt now? why in this preſent Conjuncture? It is to be ſuſpected you act more out of Fear than Conſcience. This Surmiſe I inſinuated before, and partly adverted to it But more particularly I have theſe things to offer in Reply:

I might, ad hominem, *put the Objectors in Mind how* Dr. Vane, Mr. Creſſey, *and others forſook the Church of* England, *when it was in a very low, perſecuted Condition: and were not aſhamed in their Writings to intimate as much. For one of the Motives of their withdrawing was, that She never had been well grounded; and therefore God ſeemed to forſake her, and* Lopt off her Head: *with much more to the ſame Purpoſe; as is particularly to be ſeen in* Dr. Bailey's End to Controverſie. *But I ſcorn ſuch Diſingenuous, Mean-ſpirited Principles. And I deſire that they would withal conſider that the Church of* England *was then reduced to thoſe Exigences for her conſtant and never blemiſhed Loyalty. Whereas divers of themſelves now ſtand charged with ſomething elſe beſides* Idolatry *and* Phanaticiſme.

But to anſwer for once and all; I confeſs I do it out of Fear; not of any temporal Incommodity; for that might ſeveral other wayes be avoided: but of having Fellowſhip with any of thoſe horrid Works of Darkneſs, whereof many of its Profeſſors, and the Religion it ſelf are accuſed. And this may ſerve for my old Friends.

Now as for your ſelf and all other candid diſintereſted Perſons, I know it will be ſatisfactory to put you in mind, that to impute my Proceedings to the frowning of the Times on that Party, is Fallacia non Cauſæ pro Cauſa: *a Miſtake of the Adjunct or Circumſtance of Time, for the Principal Motive. The Converſion of a Sinner is the Work of Omnipotence; who as he is moſt free in all his Actions* ad Extra; *ſo eſpecially in the reclaiming of a ſtrayed Sheep. He is no wayes tied up to the Circumſtances of* Whom, How, Where or When. Neſcit tarda Molimina Spiritûs Sancti Gratia, *ſayes S.* Bernard. *And if he were graciouſly pleaſed more effectually to touch my Heart now, than at any other time (and times of Affliction are his eſpecial Seaſons.* Afflictio dat Intellectum. Cum Occideret eos *&c.) I know no other Account can be given of it than that of our B. Saviour,* Even ſo Father, for ſo it ſeemed Good in thy Sight. *Nay I have before demonſtrated that theſe Thoughts have been long hovering in my Mind, though perhaps they had not been altogether ſo ſuddenly declared, but out of a deep Reſentment of the Dangers of any further neglecting the Divine Call: and a ſeaſonable Deſire to Teſtifie to the World my perfect Abhorrence of ſuch deſperate Practices and Principles, which I am convinced are pernicious both to Publick Polity and Civil Society. And I hope none can reaſonably be angry, that I have gained more Experience now I am thirty ſix years old, than I had when I was but twenty.*

Theſe are the Principal Matters I thought worth your Knowledge at preſent, wherein I proteſt before God and Man, that I have no other Deſign but the Quiet of my Conſcience, and the Salvation of my Soul. And when I have given a publick

lick Tolerable Account of this Affair, I will take my leave of this Noble Science of Controverſie (*as Mr.* Serjeant *calls it*) *having alwayes been more addicted to* Aſcetick Theology; *and ſit down with Divine* Anſelm's *Reſolution,* Quid reſtat per Totam Vitam meam, niſi ut Defleam Totam Vitam meam? *Croſſes and Afflictions are no more than I expect and deſerve, having hitherto been ſo little acquainted with them. The Wiſe man hath read my Doom to me,* Fili, accedens ad ſervitutem Dei, præpara Animum tuum ad Tentationem.

As for the ſincerity of my Reſolutions, I can but Appeal to that Great Searcher of Hearts and Tryer of Reins. And though ſome Folk talk of Diſpenſations from Rome *for the taking All Oaths, and Complying with All Externals: and no meaner a Perſon than the Author of the Difference between the Church and Court of* Rome, *out of Arch-Biſhop* Spotſwood's *Hiſtory, mentions ſome ſuch like thing practiſed in* Scotland: *yet, with ſubmiſſion to the Learned Author, I conceive there is no ſuch matter: ſince the* Pope *himſelf could never be induced to Approve even the ſingle Oath of Allegiance; but expreſly condemned it, and ſeverely prohibited the taking of it, as containing, ſaith he, divers Points contrary to Salvation. And moreover, put caſe any thing of that nature were in Being; I here ſolemnly Avow, that I diſown all ſuch Pretended Authority.*

One Circumſtance, not very Material I confeſs (but I would not too much ſwerve from the Accurate Exactneſs of Writers of Epiſtles Apologetical *: though Mr.* Creſſey *obſerve it in the Beginning, and I in the Concluſion) muſt not be forgotten; and thus it is: To you above all Perſons living, I have an Obligation to recurr in Spiritual Concerns; for I am your Pariſhioner:* Holborn *having been the place of my Nativity. I have nothing more, but with all Reſpect and Gratitude to aſſure you I am*

Reverend and Honoured Sir,

Your moſt obliged

and Humble Servant

December 15. 1678.

T. S.

Several

Several Weighty
CONSIDERATIONS
Humbly Recommended
To the Serious Peruſal of ALL: eſpecially the *Roman Catholicks* of *England*.

IT is a very good Rule preſcribed by ſome Spiritual Writers, *That in Converſe, we ſhould rather diſcourſe of Things, than Perſons*. And I intend, as much as the Matter will permit, to obſerve it in this ſubſequent Treatiſe; carefully avoiding all perſonal Reflections, eſpecially upon ſuch as are living; and ſhall only bring ſome Doctrines and Practices to the Teſt, which, though they paſs for currant with many, will yet be found adulterate and contrary to Holy Scripture, the beſt Genuine Antiquity, and Right Reaſon: highly ſcandalous to the Chriſtian Religion in General, deſtructive of Civil Government, fatal to Humane Society, and very pernicious both to the Spiritual and Temporal Concerns of the Practiſers even in their private Capacity.

In ſhort, I ſhall very plainly and briefly endeavour to make good two Aſſertions:

1. That there is no ſufficient Ground for any one to forſake the Communion of the Church of *England*, and incorporate with that of *Rome*.

2. That there is all Reaſon imaginable both for ſuch as have been educated in the *Roman* Communion, to *Reform*; and for ſuch as have unwarily ingaged with her, to *Return*.

This was the happy Reſult of theſe following Conſiderations upon my own Heart: And it ſhall be my Prayer that they may have the ſame Bleſſed Effect in the impartial Peruſers of them.

The ſacred Oracles of the Holy Scriptures deſervedly Command our firſt Inquiry.

We have Cardinal *Bellarmine's* own Conceſſion, that in the grand Queſtion of the Church, the Scripture is better known than the Church. Conſequently then, not only her Authority but her very Being muſt be ſubordinate to it. And therefore in the firſt place let us ſee what Sentiments the Church of *England* hath of theſe Heavenly Records, and whether Hers, or thoſe of the *Roman* Church be more Conſonant to Pure Antiquity, Reaſon, and Holy Writ it ſelf.

All Proteſtants, and particularly the *Church* of *England*, *Artic. 6.* look upon the Holy Scriptures to contain all things neceſſary to Salvation; ſo that whatever is not read in them, or cannot be proved from them, is not to be Impoſed on any, to be received as an Article of Faith, or a Neceſſary Requiſite

quiſite to Salvation. Whence it appears, that they take Them to be the Onely, Complete, and Adequate Rule both of Faith and Life: ſufficiently intelligible and eaſie in matters that concern what is ſimply neceſſary to make us *Good* and *Happy*.

They conſequently hold, that ſince Holy Scripture is the Rule of our Faith, it muſt have an exact Proportion to that, whereof it is a Rule. So that Matters of Faith are not to be extended beyond this Rule, nor can any unwritten Traditions any way be pretended to appertain to the Subſtance of Faith.

Moreover, the Rule being the Idea, Model and great Exemplar of what is regulated by it, it is in order of Nature before the thing ſo regulated. And if the word of God be antecedent to Faith it ſelf, it muſt likewiſe precede the Faithful themſelves; and if the Faithful, then muſt it have Preheminence before the Church it ſelf, which is nothing elſe but the Congregation of the Faithful. Thus the Church of *Rome* will evidently fall ſhort of that Prerogative ſhe ſo preſumptuouſly arrogates, of being both *Before*, and *Above* the Scripture.

Again, a Rule conſiſting in *Indiviſibili*, as we ſay, *i. e.* being of that Nature that it is not to be inlarged or diminiſhed; how guilty are they who either make Additions to, or Subſtractions from it? Both which the *Roman* Church practiſeth, as *de facto* will be manifeſt in the Sequele of this ſmall Tract.

In Fine they hold the Word of God written, to be that one, infallible, entire Rule, whereby all men, Learned and Unlearned, may in all neceſſary and fundamental Points of Faith and Manners be ſufficiently inſtructed what is to be embraced for *True* and *Good*: That it is a Rule moſt Certain, Plain, Univerſal, Impartial, not addicted to one Side more than another: (which neither Pope, Conclave nor Councel can ſo much as pretend to) of Power and Authority able to convince the Conſciences of ſuch as uſe it, and from which there can be no Appeal. And the only Cauſe why any miſs of the True Faith, is, becauſe they do not ſincerely ſeek and find out this infallible Rule; or having found it, will not with an obedient Mind captivate their Underſtanding, but have Acceſs to it with Pride, Curioſity, Prejudice, or ſome other unmortifyed Luſt or Impediment.

More eſpecially the Church of *England*, beſides that high Veneration that ſhe her ſelf hath for theſe ſacred Books, labours to confirm and root the ſame in the Hearts of her obedient Children, by her Devout Practice. For, to omit the Frequent, Laborious and Judicious Preaching and Expounding of them in this Church; ſhe hath ſo prudently diſpoſed of her publick Liturgy, that every day ſome Part and Portion of both Teſtaments is appointed to be read: The whole Book of Pſalms is gone through once a Moneth, the Old Teſtament once, and the New thrice every year; with other moſt excellent Exerciſes of Piety; (at which even the *Romaniſts* themſelves

ſelves can take no juſt Exception; and a very great Author affirms, that a modern Pope would have approved the whole Service-Book, had his Authority but been acknowledged) which diſcreet Courſe cannot but afford much heavenly Inſtruction and Conſolation to the conſtant Attenders on ſuch Bleſſed Opportunities.

But what ſaith the Church of *Rome* all this while in this Buſineſs? In her *Tridentine* Council, Seſs. 4. Can. 1. She expreſly Decrees, that unwritten Traditions are of equal Authority with the written Word; that they are to be received with the ſame Reverence and Affection. And Cardinal *Hoſius*, who was one who in the Popes Name preſided at that Council, defends that moſt Blaſphemous Speech of *Wolfangus Hermannus*, that the Scripture is of no more Authority than *Eſop's Fables*, but for the Churches and Popes Approbation, lib. 3. *de Authorit. Script.* The Council of *Baſil* would fain perſwade us that the Churches Acts and Cuſtoms muſt be to us inſtead of the Scriptures, (*Inſtar habeant Sacrarum Scripturarum*) for that the Scripture and Churches Cuſtoms both require the ſame Affection and Reſpect.

Indeed I find the *Romiſh* Doctors in nothing more fluent than in degrading and vilifying the Scriptures. Our Country man, Dr. *Stapleton*, poſitively affirms, that the Church hath Authority to put into the Number of Books of Scripture, and to make Canonical the Writings of *Hermes* and Conſtitutions of *Clemens* (two famous Counterfeits) and that then they would have the ſame Authority which other Books have, canonized by the Apoſtles themſelves. Some call them a Noſe of Wax, to be wreſted any way. *Cardinal Cuſanus* bluſhes not to write that the Scriptures are fitted to the time, and variouſly underſtood; the ſenſe thereof being one while this, and another while that, according as it pleaſes the Church to change her Judgment. Some teach that the Scripture is not ſimply neceſſary, that God gave it not to the People but to the Doctors and Paſtors; and that we muſt live more according to the Dictates of the Church, than the Scripture. *Eckius*, the great Antagoniſt of *Luther*, would make us believe that Chriſt never gave any Command to his Apoſtles, to write any thing. Which yet ſeems very odd, when ſuch an expreſs Injunction was lay'd on S. *John* to write that myſtical Book of the Apocalypſe, which certainly is not more conducing to the Churches Edification than our B. Saviour's Sermon on the Mount, and the many other practical Diſcourſes both of himſelf and his Diſciples. In a word, the moſt ingenuous and civil among their Writers think they have pay'd all due Reſpect to Holy writ, when they term it a Dumb Judge, Dead Ink, or Ink ſhaped into various Forms and Characters. Notwithſtanding which I humbly conceive, that let an Indifferent Perſon open the Bible and the Canons of the Council of *Trent* together, and he will receive at leaſt as clear and full Satisfaction from the Bible, as from the other; unleſs we will impiouſly deny Almighty God the Faculty of expreſſing his holy Will and Pleaſure as intelligibly as frail Men can theirs: or without any ſhew of Reaſon affirm with a late Divine, that Religion it ſelf was never fully ſetled till that upſtart Conventicle.

Con-

Conformable to the Sentiments are the Practices of that Church, in keeping the Bible lock'd up in an Unknown Tongue from the Uſe of the Vulgar. *Clement* the Eighth very ſtrictly orders all Vulgar Tranſlations to be put into the Index of Prohibited Books. And in *Italy* and *Spain*, and wherever the Inquiſition hath the leaſt Juriſdiction, the very keeping of them is a Crime no leſs than Capital.

It is true, where the Reformation hath got any footing, Faculties are ſometimes granted to read a Tranſlation; but clog'd with ſo many Proviſo's and various Cautions, and their Spiritual Guides give ſo ſmall Encouragement to it, that it ſeems rather a Trick to ſtop the Mouthes of their Adverſaries, when they Object the Prohibition of Reading Scripture, than any real Intention of Promoting ſo Pious an Exerciſe among their Devotes. Beſides, their other Forms of Devotion, Roſaries, or ſaying over the Beads after divers Methods, our Ladies Office, Prayers for the Dead, Manuals, the long Litanies of Saints, hearing of Maſſes, reading of Legends, *&c.* are in ſo great Vogue, and take up ſo conſiderable a Time, that I ſcarce ſee how any can be allotted for that contemned Employment of ſtudying Gods Word: which ought to be the Meditation of every good Chriſtian Day and Night. Indeed this neglect (to ſay no worſe) of Holy Scripture is ſo notorious among, and ſo peculiar to thoſe of that Way, and the Ignorance not only of the Laity but of divers of the Clergy in that kind of Learning eſpecially, is ſo groſs, that it would be a Work of Supererogation to attempt the proof of it: Their Doctors generally pretending Tranſlations of Scripture to be the cauſe of all Hereſies and Phanaticiſm. Nay, I have met with one ſo frantick, that he thinks it was the Devils invention to permit the people to read the Bible. *Martin. Pereſ. de Tradit.* And I remember *Thyræus de Dæmoniac.* c. 21. ſays, that thence he knew certain Perſons to be poſſeſs'd by the Devil, becauſe being but Husbandmen they were able to diſcourſe concerning Scripture.

We will now ſee what Holy Writ it ſelf, untainted Antiquity, and unprejudiced Reaſon alleage in this Caſe: and which ſide they patronize, the Reformation or the Church of *Rome*.

S. *Paul* gives this Encomium of his Diſciple *Timothy*, 2 *Ep.* c. 3. v. 15. That from a Child he had been Converſant in the Holy Scriptures, and tells him they were able to make him *Wiſe to Salvation* (which I hope is Knowledge enough, and I am ſure is a more plain, compendious Path, than the crooked Labyrinths of uncertain Traditions, forged Decrees, Canons and Fathers.) He further aſſures him, that the ſame Divine Scriptures were profitable for Doctrine, for Reproof, for Correction, for Inſtruction to Righteouſneſs; that the Man of God might be *perfect*, throughly furniſhed to *every* good Work. For my part I know not what remains then for Tradition and ſuch like Traſh to perform, ſince the Word of God alone can ſo compleat us. *Solomon*, *Prov.* 2. 9. aſſures us that Gods Law alone will make a man underſtand Righteouſneſs, and Judgment, and Equity, and *Every* good *Work*. The Prophet *Eſa.* c. 8. 20. refers us to try all things by the Law and Teſtimony: and that

we muſt conclude thoſe to have no light, who ſpeak not according to that Word. Our B. Saviour *Luke* 10. 26. When a Lawyer inquired of him what he ſhould do to inherit Eternal Life: bids him have recourſe to what was written in the Law, and asked him how he *read* there. S. *Luke* writ his Goſpel to *Theophilus* a Lay Perſon. *Luke* 1. 4. to the end he might *certainly* know thoſe things wherein he had been inſtructed. S. *John* writ his, as he himſelf teſtifies, *c.* 20. *v.* 31. that we might believe that Jeſus is the Chriſt, the Son of God, and that believing we might have Life through him. *Abraham* ſends *Dives* his Brethren to *Moſes* and the Prophets, rather than to Viſions, Apparitions, and private Revelations: which yet are ſo much pretended to and boaſted of in the *Roman* Church. Chriſt himſelf ſubmitted the Tryal both of his Doctrine and Miracles to the Cenſure of the Scriptures. *John* 5. 39. Search the Scriptures, for they are they which teſtifie of me. Thoughts are free, and I am apt to think that ſome will take the Liberty to judge it a little unreaſonable, that our B. Saviour ſhould ſo readily ſtand to the Verdict of *Moſes* and the Prophets; and yet his pretended Vicar ſhould ſcorn to ſubmit to the Cenſure of Chriſt and his Apoſtles; but defie both their Doctrines and Practices with ſo many *Non Obſtante*'s, as appears by their new model'd Creed at this day: wherein *Pius* the fourth hath coined twelve new Articles of Faith, to ſhew his ſingle Power equivalent to that of all the Apoſtles in General, who did but every one contribute his ſingle Article to that ancient Symbole bearing their Name.

S. *Paul*'s Auditors the *Bereans* are highly commended for ſearching the Scriptures daily, to examine whether the Doctrine they heard were true or no. *Act.* 17. 11. In Sum, the old Law was ſeverely injoyned to the Reading and Meditation both of Prince, Prieſt and People; men, Women and Children, as is obvious to obſerve all along the Style thereof. And the *Jews* were ſo verſed in it, as to be able to reckon up the Number of the Words, nay Letters contained therein. And the new Law excludes none, either from that *Common Salvation* it holds forth, or the means to attain it, which is the Doctrine of the Goſpel. The Epiſtles are directed to Perſons of all ſorts and both Sexes. In fine, the whole Oeconomy both of the Old and New Teſtament is ſo diametrically oppoſite to the Practice of the *Roman* Church in this Point, that it is but too too palpable that the three Main Pillars of Popery, are to keep the *Prince in awe, the Prieſt in Honour, and the People in Ignorance.*

Antiquity is ſo luxuriant in this point, that it will be a greater Difficulty to ſelect than to accumulate. Famous is that Speech of *Conſtantine* the great to the Fathers in the Nicene Council, recorded by *Theodor. Hiſtor.* l. 1. c. 7. and this Saying among the reſt is very remarkable: We have the teaching of the Holy Ghoſt *written*: for the Evangelical and Apoſtolical Books and the old Prophets do evidently teach us the things that are *needful* to be known

known concerning God. Wherefore laying aſide all Contention let us out of *the Divinely Inſpired Scripture, take the Reſolution of thoſe things we ſeek for. Tertullian* contr. *Hermog.* in plain terms calls the Scripture *The Rule of Faith.* St. *Chryſoſtom* Hom. 13. in 2 *ad Cor.* ſtyles it, A moſt Excellent Rule and Exact Ballance to try All things by. St. *Auguſt.* in l. 2. *de Nupt. & Concup.* c. 33. ſpeaks thus: This Controverſie depending between us requires a Judge: let Chriſt therefore judge, and let the Apoſtle *Paul* judge with him: becauſe Chriſt ſpeaks in his Apoſtle. But moſt Memorable is that Paſſage of *Optatus contr. Parmen.* l. 5. where he thus preſſes the *Donatiſt:* We are (ſaith he) to enquire out ſome to be Judges between us in theſe Controverſies: The Chriſtians cannot, becauſe both ſides cannot yield them: and by part-taking the Truth will be hindred: the Judge muſt be had from *without our ſelves.* If a *Pagan*, he knows not the Myſteries of Chriſtianity: if a *Jew*, he is an Enemy to Baptiſme: therefore on Earth no judgment concerning this matter can be found. The Judge muſt be had from Heaven. But to what end ſhould we knock at Heaven, when here we have one in the Goſpel? Quotations might be Infinite, but I Superſede.

Nor did the Antient Fathers onely think this themſelves, but by their frequent Tranſlations of the Scripture, and vehement Exhortations to the People to read them ſo tranſlated, they endeavoured to beget the ſame awful Reſpect to Gods Holy Word in the Minds of all. *Ulphilas*, a Biſhop of the *Goths*, turned the Scripture into that Barbarous Language, as *Socrates* witneſſes. *Methodius* into the *Sclavonian.* S. *Chryſoſtom.* hom. 1. in *Johan.* makes mention of *Syrian*, *Ægyptian*, *Indian*, *Perſian* and *Ethiopian* Tranſlations. *Theodoret de Curand. Græc. Affect.* aſſures us the Bible was turned into all Languages uſed in the World, *Greek*, *Latin*, *Armenian*, *Scythian*, *Sarmatian*, &c. And we have at this day divers Fragments of them remaining. Venerable *Bede* ſhews the ſame of our own Country.

To ſpeak plain: I know no Topick the Fathers are more Copious upon, than in calling upon the People to get Bibles, to read them, to examin what they hear by them, and ſeverely inveighing againſt the Negligence of ſuch as did not: According to the Apoſtles Advice even to the Laity, *Coloſ.* 3. 16. *Let the Word of Chriſt dwell in you richly in all Wiſdom, teaching and admoniſhing one another.*

Theodoret, before cited, gives this Account of his Times. You ſhall every where ſee theſe Points of our Faith to be known and underſtood, not only by ſuch as are Teachers in the Church, but by Smiths, Weavers, and all kinds of Artificers: yea, all our Women, not only ſuch as are Book-learned, but alſo by them who get their Living by the Needle, Maid-ſervants and Waiting-women: and not Citizens only, but Husbandmen are very skilful in theſe things. You may hear among us Ditchers and Neat-herds diſcourſing of the Trinity and the Creation.

And that the Laity were thus familiar with the Bible, may evidently be made out, in that *Nectarius*, of a Judge, was made Biſhop of *Conſtantinople*; St. *Ambroſe*, of a Secular Deputy, Biſhop of *Milan*; *Gregory* the Father of *Nazianzen*, of a Lay-man was made a Biſhop: *Origen* from a Child was Learned in the Scriptures, and to the great Joy of his Father *Leonides*, a Holy Martyr, often queſtioned with him concerning the meaning of difficult places. *Macrina*, St. *Baſil's* Nurſe, taught him the Scriptures when he was very young: and *Gorgonia*, the Siſter of *St. Gregory Nazianzen*, was rarely well experienced in them.

I will wind up this Argument with declaring what was St. *Jerom's* mind in ſo Weighty a Buſineſs. He, beſides his Writing to divers Women, as *Euſtochium*, *Salvina*, *Celantia*, *&c.* commending their Labours in the Scriptures, and encouraging that ſtudy: ſpeaking of the Noble *Roman* Lady *Paula*, in the Epitaph he made upon her, he extolls her for impoſing a daily task of reading the Scriptures, on her Companions and Maids. But more ſignally in an Epiſtle to *Leta*, he gives her theſe Directions for the Education of her little Daughter. "Let the Child be deaf in hearing of "light Muſical Aires; but cauſe her every day to render a task of the Flow-"ers of Holy Scripture. Let her not be ſought for in the preſs of ſecular "People, but in the Cloſet of the Scriptures, asking Counſel of the Pro-"phets and Apoſtles concerning Spiritual Nuptials. Let her firſt learn the "Pſalter, and with thoſe Heavenly Songs wean her ſelf from light Sonnets. "Then let her be taught to Govern her Life out of *Solomons Proverbs*, and "repair to *Job* for Examples of Vertue and Patience, Let her then come "to the *Evangeliſts*, and never lay thoſe Books out of her hands. With "theſe ſhe muſt joyn the *Acts of the Apoſtles*, *&c*, But let her be cautious in "*Apocryphal Books*, and if ſhe read them, let her underſtand, that they are not "thoſe Author's, whoſe Names they carry; and that many things faulty are "mix'd with them; and it is no ſmall Wiſdom to find Gold among "Droſs.

To which excellent Advice, let me onely ſubjoyn what I find ſcatter-ed up and down in *S. Auguſtin*; *viz.* To read plain Paſſages firſt, and heartily to practiſe what we underſtand; and as for obſcure Places, Pro-phecies, Genealogies and Myſteries, whereof we ſhall never be demanded an Account at the Day of Judgment, let us leave it to the Divine Pleaſure, either to reveal them to us, or reſerve them ſtill Conceal-ed: ſince our Saviour told his own Diſciples that it was not for them to know the Times and Seaſons: but plainly informed them, that he who did his Will ſhould know of his Doctrine, whether he ſpoke from God or from himſelf. The ſame Father acquaints us with the admirable Commixture of Plainneſs and Obſcurity in the Holy Scripture: that here-by *Wanton Wits are wholſomely curbed*, *Weak Wits cheriſhed*, *and Great Wits*

Wits delighted: and that nothing of higheſt Importance is ſo perplexedly delivered in one Place, but it is as plainly ſet down in another.

I have inlarged a little more than I intended on this Theme, becauſe I am verily perſwaded, that if the Sober, Judicious *Roman* Catholicks of this Nation would be induced but for Tryal ſake a while to intermit ſome of thoſe Dry, Inſipid Devotions, which take up ſo much of their Time; and exchange them for a Pious, Humble converſing with God's Word; they would ſoon be out of Conceit with what they are now ſo fond of; and diſcover the ſandy Foundation of many of their Principles: and perhaps at laſt become of that good Abbots mind who was Unkle to Arch-Biſhop *Whitgift*, and was often heard to complain, that their Religion muſt needs at laſt fail, becauſe he found no ground for it in Gods Word.

Having conſidered hitherto the great Rule of our Faith and Life, we will now deſcend to that Article of our Creed which makes ſuch a noiſe in the World, I mean the *Holy Catholick Church*: which, omitting the various Acceptations of the Word *Church*,, as to our preſent Purpoſe, is nothing elſe but a Company of People united in the Profeſſion of the True Faith of Chriſt, and due Uſe of the Sacraments.

I am not ignorant that the Papiſts would fain foiſt in another Requiſite, to wit, *Under the Obedience of the Biſhop of Rome, the only Vicar of Chriſt upon Earth.* But to omit many other Abſurdities, I ſhall only inſtance at preſent in two: that hereby they exclude Univerſality, which they put down as an Eſſential Note of the True Church; and Charity, which I am ſure is a certain Badg of Chriſt's true Diſciples. For by this very Clauſe, they very ridiculouſly obtrude leſs than a fourth part for the Whole; and by excommunicating all the reſt from the Pale of the Church, as much as in them lies, very mercifully Doome greater, more antient and better Churches than themſelves to everlaſting flames.

To make this good, we will take our Meaſures by the Judicious Obſervation of Sir *Edwyn Sands*, who in his *Survey of Europe*, aſſures us that the *Greek* Church in Number exceeds any other: and the *Proteſtants* in Multitude and extent of Territory fall very little ſhort of thoſe that are under the *Papal* Yoke. So that here we have two four Parts. To which add all the Oriental Chriſtians, and thoſe in the Vaſt Empire of *Preſter John*, or the *Abyſſines*, who are all out of the *Roman* Communion; and queſtionleſs we ſhall find another fourth Part. And thus we have three to one, even in the point of Univerſality.

I will put this out of all diſpute by a particular Induction.

In *Aſia* we have Multitudes of Chriſtians who have nothing to do with the Pope. Thoſe of *Paleſtine* are ſubject to the Patriarch of *Jeruſalem*: the *Syrians*, under him of *Antioch*: the *Armenians* and

Georgians

Georgians have their own Patriarchs. The *Circaſſians*, and thoſe of the leſſer *Aſia*, are under him of *Conſtantinople*: The *Jacobites* and the Chriſtians of St. *Thomas* have alſo their peculiar Patriarchs.

In *Africa*, where we find any ſteps of Chriſtianity, the *Egyptians* and *Cophtes* are under the Patriarch of *Alexandria*; the *Ethiopians* or *Abyſſines*, which are innumerable, are under their own Governours Eccleſiaſtical.

In *Europe*, the *Greeks* ſubmit to the Patriarch of *Conſtantinople*. The ſpatious Empire of the *Ruſſians* hath a Patriarch at *Moſco*. The Kingdoms of *England*, *Scotland* and *Ireland*, *Denmark*, *Swedeland*, and the far greateſt part of the United *Netherlands*, *Switzerland*, *Germany* and *Hungaria*, are ſubject to Biſhops and Church-Officers of their own, without any dependance upon Him at *Rome*. Even in *Bohemia*, *Poland*, *France*, *Tranſylvania*, ſome Countreys of *Italy* there are multitudes of Reformed Churches, which have nothing to do with the *Popes* Juriſdiction. And thus that Large Univerſality of Power that the Old Gentleman at *Rome* brags of, is at laſt ſhrunk away into *Spain*, part of *France*, *Italy* and *Poland*, ſome of the Cantons of *Switzerland*, ſome of the *Low Countreys* and *Germany*. And here you have a *Map of the Papal Univerſality*.

They boaſt indeed much of their New Acquiſitions in the *Indies*: but (not to Examine by what Right they Invaded thoſe Countreys) after ſuch a brutiſh manner were thoſe Converſions made, driving the poor Natives to Baptiſme, like Herds of Beaſts to Watering, that their own Writers bluſh at Recording it. And when all comes to all, it will appear, that they *Butcher'd* more than they *Baptiz'd*. *Bartholomæus Caſa*, a Biſhop that lived in thoſe Countreys, and *Acoſta* the Jeſuit, are ſufficient Witneſſes in this matter.

And ſince We are entred upon this much cryed up Univerſality of the *Roman* Church, it will not be amiſs to glance a little at thoſe other Claims and Pretenſions whereby ſhe would Impoſe her ſelf on the World, for the Onely, Immaculate Spouſe of our Bleſſed Saviour.

Antiquity is much talked of, and it is a kind of Univerſality in regard of Time, as that before mentioned, was of Place and Perſons. But how groundleſly the *Roman* Church appropriates and ingroſſes it to her ſelf, is too apparent from the Novel *Tridentine* Conſtitutions and Articles. And beſides, it can be no Diſcriminating Note, in as much as it is applicable to things prophane as well as Sacred; even to Paganiſm it ſelf; and to Hereſies (many of which are as Antient as the firſt Century) as well as to Orthodox Doctrine. And if we come down to Practice, we ſhall find it far more feaſible to diſcover the

True

True Church here or there at preſent, than to diſcern where it was in the conſtant Series of many Ages. Hiſtory being one of the moſt obſcure, intricate, tedious and fallacious Principles, in this caſe, whereon we can poſſibly proceed. Nor could any particular Church or the Catholick Church it ſelf at the Beginning lay any Claim to the Title of being ancient. Beſides, the Characteriſtical of Truth is not ſo much to be *Antiqua*, Old, as *Prima*, from the Beginning, from Chriſt and his Apoſtles: and ſuch Antiquity the Church of *England* is very willing to be tryed by in every one of her Articles. So that here are two Conditions deficient, *Soli & Semper*: Antiquity belongs not only to the True Church, nor is it alwayes competible to it.

To this is reducible their Duration or Continuance, but this is rejected in the ſame manner as their Antiquity is: to which it is ſo near allyed.

And here by the way we have a moſt Satisfactory Reply to that thredbare Demand, *Where was your Religion before Luther?* I will not at preſent uſe his Anſwer, though very good; *That it was in the Bible, where theirs never was.* Nor will I demand where theirs was before the late Aſſembly at *Trent*, ſome years after *Luther?* But I ſay it was by wonderful Providence preſerved all along down from the Apoſtles dayes to ours, and ſo will be to the Conſummation of the World. So we need not turn over all the Immenſe Volumes of Antiquity to give in a Catalogue of viſible Profeſſors of the Reformation, (and yet this may and hath been ſufficiently done) but our only Task is to prove our Religion the ſame which was taught by the Bleſſed Jeſus and his Apoſtles; which can only be done by appealing to the Sacred Records of the Goſpel: and as for the Profeſſors, we have his Promiſe that he will preſerve a Select Company (though ſometimes living in a corrupt viſible Church, as Wheat among Tares, or the ſeven thouſand in *Eliſha*'s time that had not bowed their Knees to *Baal*. 1 *Kings* 19. 18.) to his ſecond Coming; though he hath not told us where to find them in every year. And therefore ſuch as go about to demonſtrate that ſuch Profeſſors were not in Being, do but attempt to enervate our Saviours Promiſe, and render themſelves and Chriſtianity equally ridiculous.

The Multitude Extent, and Variety of their own Profeſſors is indeed Matter of great Oſtentation; and it hath in part been adverted to in the Buſineſs of Univerſality. But in Truth it is ſo far from being a certain Argument of the Truth of their Church, that it rather concludes the Contrary. Fear not *little Flock*, ſayes our Saviour; and ſtrive to enter in at the *Straight Gate*. What ſhall we think of that time S. *Jerome* ſpeaks of, *Cum ingemuit Orbis & Mirabatur ſe factum Arianum?* when, as *Vincentius Lyrinenſis* ſpeaks, in a manner all the Latin Biſhops partly by Force and partly

ly by Fraud, were deluded into Arianiſme? It is indeed a Note of Anti-Chriſt. *Revel.* 17. That the Whore ſhall ſit upon many Waters; which Waters are People, and Nations and Tongues.

As for the Name *Catholick*, ſo often objected, we know that Names have little Weight with wiſe men; that there were ſome Heretiçks who called themſelves *Apoſtolical Men*; that S. *John* in his *Apocalypſe* tells us there were ſuch as had a *Name* to live, but were dead; and that *Bellarmine* himſelf acknowledges, that if one only Province ſhould retain the True Faith, yet might it be called *Catholick*.

The Succeſſion of Biſhops from the Apoſtles times, is another very plauſible Topick, on which they much Deſcant: and I confeſs it bore great Sway with me for a long time, eſpecially as to the Validity of Holy Orders. Yet upon Mature Deliberation I found more of Pomp than real Solidity in this Pageant: though our Ears are continually filled with Clamour about it. For neither doth it agree only with the true Church, ſince themſelves acknowledge it among the *Greeks*, (as in the Patriarchates of *Conſtantinople* and *Alexandria:* the former whereof derives from S. *Mark*, the other down ſucceſſively from S. *Andrew* to this day:) nor, if you will credit S. *Ambroſe de pœnit.* l. 1. c. 6. is Succeſſion of Perſons ſo much to be heeded as Succeſſion of Doctrin; *Non habent hæreditatem Petri, qui fidem Petri non habent.* Wherefore if the preſent *Roman* Church want the Life and Soul of True Apoſtolical Succeſſion, to wit, Apoſtolical Doctrine, a meer local and titular Succeſſion is little worth.

But the Miſchief is, that the viſible Succeſſion of Biſhops in that Sea, is not ſo Glorious and Uninterrupted as is pretended. And this is notorious in all Monuments of Hiſtory and Antiquity, that it hath been foully ſtained by Simoniacal and Violent Entries upon the Popedom; by Schiſmatical Intruſions, and by a perfect Alteration of the very Form and Subſtance of Election appointed by the Apoſtles, and practiſed in the primitive Church. For either S. *Peter* named his Succeſſor, or he was choſen by the Clergy alone, or elſe by the Clergy and People, and then confirmed by the Emperour. But now he is choſen by a pack of Cardinals, a ſort of Clergy altogether unheard of in primitive Ages, all created by Popes themſelves, ſome in Favour to their Kindred, others in Faction, and to curry Kindneſs with ſome Chriſtian Princes, eſpecially thoſe of *France*, and the Houſe of *Auſtria*, who alwayes have their Creatures very buſie in the Conclave; moſt of them as fit for Clergy-men as *S. Peter* was for a Courtier, as my Lord of *Hereford* ſpeaks in his Legacy; a Spruce, Delicate, Effeminate Clergy: (and the World talks far worſe things of them) very fit perſons for the Choice of *S. Peters* infallible Succeſſor.

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The truth is, this boasted succession is so weak a support to the Roman Cause, that their most confident Champions could never so much as pretend the very shadow of Divine Authority for it. *Alphonsus à Castro* and others very frankly acknowledge it is not *De fide*, a matter of Faith, that this or that, or the present Pope is *S. Peter's Successor*. But of this more by and by. Nor is there the least agreement in Ecclesiastical History concerning the Immediate Successor of *S. Peter*. Some put *Linus* next, some *Clemens*, some *Cletus*. And it is a most miserable Shift that *Bellarmin* is put to, and below his great Wit, to affirm the business may be thus Composed; That *S. Peter* left his Episcopal Seat to *Clement*: but *Clement*, when *S. Peter* was dead, out of his Humility would not ascend the Chair, as long as *Linus* and *Cletus* were living, who had been the *Coadjutors* of *S. Peter* in his Episcopal Function: so *Linus* succeeded *S. Peter*, *Cletus* to *Linus*, and *Clemens* to *Cletus*. But if *S. Peter* left his Chair to *Clement*, how comes this Apostolical constitution to be abolished, and why do not the Popes now design their Successors, but leave a matter of so high Consequence to the factious Canvassing of the Haughty Ambitious Cardinals? How durst *Clement* refuse the Charge; intrusted to him by so great an *Apostle*, and that only out of a Compliment?

A Man that duly ponders this Circumstance, might very well conclude it to be a most remarkable Providence of God, and intended for the humbling of that proud Church, that when they come to make good their claim to that Exorbitant, unlimited Authority they at this day Exercise in the Christian World, they should stumble at the very Threshold, as we say, and fail in the very first name of their Vaunted Catalogue. In a Word, all things here are dark and in a Riddle, and afford not sufficient matter even to ground an *Implicit Faith* upon.

But what shall we think of those long and frequent Vacations in that See for some years together? and Schisms for 30 nay 70 years? Which was a long Vacation indeed; for it is *Bellarmin's* Rule, *An uncertain Pope is accounted for none at all.* Nay many and great Authors have put a Woman into the Succession; many of their Bishops have been Hereticks, and this makes another Interruption: even Occult Heresie rendering the Pope, *ipso facto*, none.

Let Cardinal *Baronius*, a Man of undoubted Authority with them, serve instead of a thousand Witnesses. He, treating of the year of our Lord, 912, thus represents the wretched, deformed Face of that Church. How filthy a time was it when Whores bare all the sway at *Rome*? At their pleasure Sees were changed, Bishopricks disposed of, and which is most horrible and scarce to be uttered, their *Gallants* were thrust into the Seat of *Peter*. We find no where any mention of Clergy choosing or giving Consent; all Canons were put to silence, the Pontifical Decrees were choaked, Ancient Traditions proscribed, and all Sacred Rites extinguished. Thus had *Lust* gotten every thing into its own hand.

Where did this Uninterrupted Succeſſion ſleep all this While? Well near 200 years together, ſaies the ſame Annaliſt, did theſe monſtrous abuſes continue. Certainly if Diſcontinuance of Time, or Illegal Entry can marr a ſucceſſion, this of the *Romiſh* Church is ſufficiently ſpoiled. *Benedict* the *9th* was a Boy of 10 years old. *John* the *13th.* a Hectoring Lad not above 18. *John* the *11th.* was ſet up by that Infamous Strumpet *Theodora*: and her Daughter *Marozia* by force of Arms depoſed him. *John* the *12th.* was Baſtard to *Sergius* by *Marozia*, and was violently intruded into the Popedome by his Mother.

It is not ſo much the wickedneſs of theſe Popes Lives, as the manner of their Creation, that we urge to invalidate the Succeſſion. Above 50 Popes were thus inſtalled ſucceſſively for thoſe 200 years: beſides many other occaſions, frequently occurring in Hiſtory, wherein this applauded Succeſſion hath been very notably diſturbed.

To which if we adjoin the 30 Schiſms, wherein 2 and 3 Popes have been ſet up in oppoſition to one another; the matter will be out of all Controverſie. One of theſe Schiſms, *viz.* that between *Clement* and *Urban* laſted for 70 years, till the Duke of *Savoy* was Elected Pope by the Council of *Baſil*, to put a period to that fatal Tragedy. And many of theſe Competitors had ſuch Learned Advocates and Patrons, that *Bellarmin* cannot aſſign which was the true Pope.—— *pudet hæc opprobria vobis* —— *Et dici potuiſſe et non potuiſſe refelli.*

Their Unity is no leſs bragg'd of, than their Univerſality and Succeſſion; and with as little Juſtice; for Unity without Truth and ſincere Charity is but a Conſpiracy or Confederation. I find *Revel.* 17. 13. that in the Kingdome of *Anti-Chriſt*, they are of *one mind*, and make War with the Lamb. And the Devils themſelves in the poſſeſs'd perſon could unite into a *Legion.* And if we a little better conſider this pretended *Roman* Unity, it will ſoon be diſcovered to be purely ſlaviſh and enforced: an Unity of Fear more than of Affection; a product of the Inquiſition rather than of Charity. *Bellarmin* ſeems to intimate as much; They cannot think otherwiſe, ſaith he, becauſe they have ſubjugated their ſence to the ſence of another; meaning the Pope.

Nor yet is this their Unity, let the Quality of it be what it will, ſo compleat as they would make us believe. How do the *Janſeniſts* and *Jeſuits* at this day hug one another? The large Order of the *Dominicans* look upon the *Jeſuits* as no better then *Semi-Pelagians* in the Doctrine of Grace and Free Will: and the *Jeſuits* to requite them call them *Calviniſts.* The *Seculars* and *Regulars* how Unanimous they are, appears by their continual Claſhing. And thoſe who are throughly acquainted with their Cuſtoms, may eaſily perceive that there are as many *Sects* and *Factions* in point of *Opinion*, as there are *Religious Orders* in that Church; and in point of *Charity* and *Affection* as many parties as there are *Religious Houſes.* But as for that real Unity, which according

according to *Dominic. Bannes*, in 2. 2. *q.* 1. *a.* 10. conſiſts in having one God and Chriſt for our King, in being governed by the ſame Holy Law, in having the ſame Faith, Hope and Charity, the ſame Heavenly Example, one worſhip in Spirit and in Truth, one Communion or Communication of the Members; which is the Unity of that Church which includes all the Faithful from the beginning of the World to the end, *&c.* In ſhort, ſuch an Unity as the Holy Scriptures require, in being derived from one beginning, which is the Holy Ghoſt, who as one Soul quickens and moves all the Parts: in having one Head which is Jeſus Chriſt: and in being but one Body, partaking the ſame Doctrine, Sacraments and Worſhip of God: This Unity by God's Grace all true Proteſtants breath after, as may apparently be evinced by the Harmony of their Confeſſions; although in points of ſmaller importance there may be ſome little differences: and moſt of their Diſſentions are rather Verbal then Real.

As to the Sanctity of that Church, let but the Lives of the *Roman* Biſhops be peruſed, written by their own Authors (a noyſomer Sink and Kennel of Abomination can never be raked up in all Antiquity: ſome *Atheiſts*, ſome *Conjurers*, ſome *Adulterers*, *Murderers*, *Inceſtuous*, *Sodomites*, *Simoniacks*, and what not?) the manners and converſation of their Clergy, Religious Men and Women, ſo heinouſly tax'd and inveigh'd againſt by thoſe Famous Writers of their own ſide, *S. Bernard*, *Nic. Clemangis*, *Alvar*, *Pelagius*, *Claud. Eſpenceus*, &c. and at leaſt they will have little cauſe ſo boldly to challenge, and appropriate it to themſelves above all their Neighbours. Theſe things are ſufficiently known to any that have viewed their Doctors, or converſed even with their Modern practices: (though themſelves are very much amended ſince the Reformation.) But I love not to tell ſtories out of the School, and I promiſed at firſt to refrain from perſonal Reflections. There are Books enough on this Subject, and the World talks ſufficiently loud of it.

If all the precedent Prerogatives ſignifie nothing, at laſt we muſt be overborn by whole Legions of Innumerable Miracles that are obtruded upon our Credit. But ſo ſpurious, ſo ridiculous, ſo impious many of them, that the more modeſt and diſcreet among themſelves dare not own them. Their beſt Writers affirm, That Miracles are not neceſſary for the Being of a Church, but onely for the Begetting of a new Faith, or an Extraordinary Miſſion.

Nay I may add not for an Extraordinary Miſſion neither; as we may ſee in many of the Prophets of the Old Teſtament, of whoſe Miracles not one word is mentioned. Nor are they at all to be expected from or by the Proteſtants, who neither profeſs a new Faith nor an Extraordinary Miſſion. The Miracles of our Saviour, his Apoſtles and the firſt Age of the Church, are ſufficient *Seals* to the Doctrine they own. And as for thoſe ſo importunately urged by the *Romaniſts*, they are but too often convinced to be meer juggles, contrivances for filthy Lucre, Sleights to uphold ſome gainful Doctrine, or to advance the reputation of ſome particular place or Religious Order, done

in a Corner; of a far different Nature from those of our B. Saviour, and rather of the same stamp with those the Apostle speaks of. 2 *Thess.* 2. 9. belonging to him, who comes with all Power and *Signs and Lying Wonders*: and *Revel.* 13. 13. who doth *great Wonders*, so that he makes fire come down from Heaven on Earth in the Sight of Men. A man that duly ponders the most palpable Cheats and Impostures of this kind daily practised in the Church of *Rome* for these By-Respects, would almost be of Mr. *Chillingworth*'s mind, that it cannot be sufficiently made out, that ever so much as a Lame Horse was cured by way of Miracle in confirmation of any Popish Tenet.

Some insist much on the Outward Prosperity, Pomp, Splendour and Magnificence of their Church. To this the Wise Man hath given an answer, *Eccles.* 9. 1. *Our Works are in the hand of God, and no man knows either Love or Hatred by all that is before him.* Nay, our Saviour puts it down as a Mark of the false Church. *Joh.* 16. 20. *Verily I say unto you, that you shall weep and lament, but the World shall rejoyce.*

It remains then, that the onely Certain and Evident marks of a True Apostolical Church are, *The Sincere Preaching of God's Word*, and a *Due Administration of the Sacraments.* To which may be annexed *Ecclesiastical Discipline*; but this is reducible to the other two. These are All that the Holy Scriptures afford us. *Matth.* 28. 19. *Go and Teach all Nations, baptizing them in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; Teaching them to observe all things whatever I have commanded you.* Act. 2. 42. *And they continued stedfastly in the Apostles Doctrin and Fellowship, and in Breaking of Bread, and Prayers.*

Having thus survey'd the *Roman* Church in general, it will hardly be thought Good Manners, if we neglect his Holiness the Pope in particular, or as some are pleased to flatter him, *The Church Virtual.* For what ever stirr and bustle they make about the Church their *Mother*, the plain English of their meaning is nothing but the Pope their *Father.*

It is the expres Doctrin of S. *Thomas Aquinas* (and his Doctrin in that Church is little less than Canonized) 2. 2. *q.* 1. *a.* 10. that the making of a true Creed belongs to the Pope; as all other things do which belong to the Whole Church: and that the Whole Authority of the Universal Church abides in him. 2. 2. *q.* 12. *a.* 2. Thus as they take all Authority and Sufficiency from the Scripture and give it to the Church, so all the Churche's Authority they attribute to the Pope. *Gregorius de Valentia*, one of the Learnedst Jesuits, tells us plainly, That by the Church they mean *Its Head*; that is to say, the *Roman* Bishop, in whom resides the full Authority of the Church, when he pleases to Determin matters of Faith, whether he doth it with a Council or without. *Bellarmine* teaches, that the Pope himself without any Council may decree matters of Faith. *Bannes* affirms, that the Authority of the Universal Church, the Authority of a Council, and the Authority

thority of the Pope, are one and the same thing. *The Canon Law in Sext. Extrav. Johan. 22. c. Cum inter. in Gloss.* speaks thus, It is Hereſie to think *Our Lord God the Pope* may not Decree as he doth. And *Distinct. 19. in Canon.* His Reſcripts and Decretal Epiſtles are Canonical Scripture.

All which paſſages clearly convince us what is the meaning of thoſe perpetual Braggs of the Catholick Church.

His Holyneſs muſt excuſe me, if, being no Courtier, I addreſs not my ſelf to him in the phraſe of the Roman Inſcription to *Paul* the V. yet to be ſeen in that City; ſaluting him as a *Vice-God*, and the Stout Aſſertor of the *Pontifical Omnipotency*: or as the *Gloſs of the Canon Law* in their laſt and beſt Editions, *viz.* the *Roman*, 1580, and *Pariſian*, 1612. *Our Lord God the Pope.* Waving therefore theſe Ceremonies, I ſhall ſummarily conſider his Authority, both what he pretends to, and what it really is.

And here ſtarts forth a material Difficulty, even at our firſt ſetting out: namely, Whether S. *Peter*, whence all this Power and Soveraignty is pretended, were himſelf Biſhop of *Rome*, or were indeed ever at *Rome?* I will not Deny either, becauſe I know many of the Antients plead for both. But the Point being onely grounded on Humane Authority (for Divine Authority ſeems rather to contradict it) *i. e.* Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtory; and the Differences among the Reporters being ſo Many and ſo Conſiderable, both in Chronology and divers other Weighty Circumſtances; and the Probabilities that are produced againſt it being not altogether Contemptible, I hope a Man may be excuſed from being a *Damn'd Hererick*, if he do not believe it to be a Fundamental Article of Faith (*The Article of the Standing or Falling Church*, ſayes a Modern Famous Controvertiſt) and conſequently hath a Meaner Eſteem for all that prodigious Train of Poſitions, which are thence deduced.

Theſe following Inducements make it at leaſt Doubtful whether S. *Peter* ever was Biſhop of *Rome*, or was ever there.

For his ever having been at *Rome*, we do not much ſtand upon it. But the Reaſons and Teſtimonies brought out of Humane Hiſtories (which onely mention it) are ſo uncertain and involv'd with ſuch difficulties, as may make any Man deſervedly queſtion it. *Vellenus* hath publiſhed ſeveral Demonſtrations that he was never there. And thoſe Authorities of the Fathers that are alleged for it are ſo Various, that the Learned'ſt Romaniſts cannot reconcile them. *Marſilius Patavinus* in his *Defenſ. Pacis, part. 2. c. 16.* ſayes, By Scripture it cannot be made out, either that S. *Peter* was Biſhop of *Rome*, or that he was ever there at all: and when he conſiders the Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtorians that affirm it, he doth it ſo, that it is evident he doth not believe them. It is true, S. *Peter* in his 1. Ep. c. 5. 13. writes as from *Babylon*; but that *Babylon* was in *Aſſyria*. For though in the Apocalyptical Viſions, *Rome* is deſigned by *Babylon*; yet in a plain Epiſtolary Salutation there was no reaſon at all for ſuch a Trope. Nor doth S. *Paul* or S. *Luke*, who make frequent mention of *Rome*, ever call it *Babylon*.

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There is indeed an *Old Chair* at *Rome*, pretended to be S. *Peter*'s, and on certain daies it is ſhewn to the people; as likewiſe a *Sepulchre*, and certain parts of his Body, as Relicks. But the Jugling and Impoſture with Reliques and ſuch like Trumpery is ſo well known, that the World hath long ſince leſſen'd her Credit to ſuch Monuments. Nor hath it been the loweſt part of *Rome*'s Policy for many Ages with Feigned Miracles, Counterfeit Relicks, and Forged Records and Legends to raiſe in the Vulgar an Opinion of her Holineſs, and ſo maintain her Grandeur. But we have been too long on this Impertinency.

Whether He was ever Biſhop of *Rome*, deſerves our ſtricter Examination. Holy Writ ſeems not ſilent here, as in the former Caſe, but fully Oppoſite.

S. *Peter* and S. *Paul* by the Inſtinct of the Holy Ghoſt made an Accord that S. *Peter* ſhould Preach to the *Jews*, and S. *Paul* to the *Gentiles*. Whereupon in the Sacred Text S. *Peter*'s peculiar Title is, *The Apoſtle of the Circumciſion*: and Conſequent to his Charge we ſee, that he wrote his Epiſtles to the ſcatter'd Jews: neither did he direct any to, or date any from *Rome*. So that it is incredible he ſhould be Biſhop or Reſident there for 25 years. Whereas S. *Paul* was the *Great Doctor and Apoſtle of the Gentiles*, and both writ to the *Romans*, and taught and was impriſoned at *Rome* for ſeveral Years, as is evident from Scripture. Again, the Authours of this Story (the firſt whereof were probably *Papias* and *Dionyſius*, the one too Credulous and Erroneous, the other a Counterfeit) are wholly at a loſs in declaring when S. *Peter* came to *Rome*, how long he ſat there, when he dyed, and who were his Succeſſours. And the moſt tolerable Account that is given by the beſt Writers, How S. *Peter*, the 5th Year after Chriſt's Paſſion, went to *Antioch*, and there fix'd his Epiſcopal See for 7 years, thence removed to *Rome*, and there continued 25 Years; is no waies coherent with what is related of S. *Peter*, *Galat.* 1. & 2. *Act.* 12. & 15. From which places it is manifeſt, that S *Peter*'s moſt uſual Abode was at *Jeruſalem*, at leaſt till the 18th year after Chriſt's death, and the 17th of S. *Paul*'s Converſion. Nor is it likely that S. *Peter* ſetled his Chair at *Antioch* ſo long, ſince *Galat.* 2. we read only of his paſſing by there; and that he was ſo far from behaving himſelf as their Biſhop, that he ſeems to have underſtood little of the Affairs of that Church, till S. *Paul* had rightly informed him.

In the 16. to the *Romans* St. *Paul* ſalutes very many by name, yet takes not the leaſt notice of S. *Peter*, nor gives them the leaſt account where he was, or how he did: which ſeems ſomething odd, if S. *Peter* had then been their *Soveraign Paſtor*. And when S. *Paul* was himſelf at *Rome*, and writ diverſe Epiſtles in the Reign of *Nero* (at which time *Bellarmin* would have S. *Peter* to have been at *Rome*) though he make mention of many others of inferior rank, yet not one ſyllable of S. *Peter*. Nay he generally denies that there was any ſuch preſent with him. *Coloſ.* 4, 11. And 2 *Tim.* 4, 16. he grievouſly complains that at his firſt Anſwer, when he appeared before *Nero*, All

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men forſook him. And when S. *Paul* came firſt to *Rome*, the Jews there, who were S. *Peter*'s peculiar charge, ſeemed to know nothing of the Goſpel. *Act.* 28. Thus S. *Peter* muſt be Biſhop of *Rome* 25 years, and yet never be at *Rome*, when ever the Scripture mentions the *Roman* Church: And S. *Paul* could never find him there, though he is reported to be Martyred there at the ſame time with him.

We ſee then upon how tottering a Foundation this mighty Fabrick depends: I mean, how juſtly Queſtionable the Papal Monarchy is, even in matter of *Fact*, and to its very *An ſit*. But perhaps it may plead better for it ſelf in point of *Right and Equity*.

We will briefly here inquire into two things. 1. What Authority S. *Peter* had. 2. What Authority the Pope pretends to derive from him, and how juſtly.

That our Lord and Saviour never intended ſuch an *Abſolute, Arbitrary, Soveraign, Monarchical Government* in his Church, as the Pope at this day exerciſes both over Clergy and Layity, is as evident in the Goſpel as any Truth there contained. *Matth.* 20. 25. *You know*, ſaith Chriſt, *that the Princes of the Gentiles exerciſe Dominion over them*, &c. *But it ſhall not be ſo among you: Whoſoever will be great among you, let him be your ſervant.* And the Apoſtle, *Eph.* 4. 11. reckoning up the whole *Sacred Oeconomy, Miniſtry and Government of the Church*, lets not fall one word concerning a *Viſible Monarch: He gave ſome Apoſtles, ſome Prophets, ſome Evangeliſts, ſome Paſtors and Teachers; for the Perfecting of the Saints, for the edifying of the Body of Chriſt.* And when he recommends Unity, by reaſon of one Body, one Spirit, one Hope, one Faith, one Baptiſm, one Lord, there is no mention at all of any Pontifical Monarch.

In all the New Teſtament there is not any one called the Head of the Church, but only our Bleſſed Saviour. *Eph.* 1. 22. *God hath put all things under his feet, and given him to be Head over all things to his Church.* And chap. 4. 15. *Grow up to him in all things, who is the Head, even Chriſt.* Coloſ. 1. 18. *He is the Head of the Body, the Church.* Wherefore they are highly injurious to our Saviour who ſet up any other.

Nor do Proteſtant Princes take themſelves to be Heads of their own particular Churches, in any other ſence than the good Kings of *Iſrael* and *Juda* were; to defend the Orthodox Religion, and maintain good Order and Diſcipline in the Church; and take cognizance of abuſes crept in among any perſons Eccleſiaſtical or Civil, and reform what they find amiſs, according to the Canon of the Scripture, by the advice of their Chief Clergy. And not as the Papiſts impertinently object concerning Q. *Elizabeth*, that ſhe had aſſumed power to preach, adminiſter the Sacraments, *&c.*

And all this, as I ſaid before, is the undoubted Right of Soveraign Princes in their own Territories, and was practiſed by the Good Princes under the Old Law, with great Commendation and Reward. It was likewiſe promiſed,

ſed to the New, That *Kings* ſhould be *Nurſing Fathers*, and *Queens Nurſing Mothers* to the Church.

In fine, that Paternal Wiſdom and Providence of God, which ſo plentifully revealed to us All matters of importance for our own private Good, for the Being or Well being of his Church; (and certainly this great pretended Juriſdiction muſt be of that Nature) that the moſt Curious Inquirer can deſire nothing more; and which did under the *Moſaical Diſpenſation* ſo exactly deſcribe the Condition and Power of the High Prieſt, even to the minute Circumſtances of his Garments; ſo that none could be ſo ſtupid among the Jews, but if he read the Books of *Moſes*, he might ſufficiently underſtand that there was a High Prieſt conſtituted, and what Authority he had; would certainly have left us ſome intimation of the like Regiment under the Goſpel, had there been any ſuch matter to be expected. Whereas on the contrary we cannot there find ſo much as the Name or Title of any ſuch Dignity, nor of any Seat appointed for his Reſidence; no ſingular Office is aſſigned to him above others, no Enſigns of Soveraignty are recorded, whereby He might be diſtinguiſhed from others, no manner of Succeſſion is provided for; nor is there the leaſt practice or exerciſe of ſuch a ſingular Abſolute Power ſo much as hinted at in the whole New Teſtament. And therefore we may juſtly conclude it to be an upſtart Uſurpation, and no Authority of Divine Inſtitution.

There are but two paſſages in Scripture that with any tollerable ſhew can be made uſe of, to countenance this Supremacy that is ſo much urged to be conferred on S. *Peter*, and intayled on his Succeſſors. The one, wherein it ſeems to be promiſed; the other, wherein they ſay it was actually beſtowed.

The firſt is that famous place, the *Achilles* of the *Roman* Cauſe. *Matth.* 16. 17,18. *Thou art* Peter *and upon this Rock will I build my Church, and the Gates of Hell ſhall not prevail againſt it. And I will give unto thee the Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven; and whatſoever thou ſhalt bind on Earth ſhall be bound in Heaven, and whatſoever thou ſhalt looſe on Earth ſhall be looſed in Heaven.* Theſe words which they think ſo plain and obvious, do yet contain two *Metaphors* of a *Rock* and the *Keys*; and I cannot find in any other part of Scripture that they are explained in the *Romaniſts* ſence, *Simply* and without a *Metaphor*. I am ſure they were not ſo eaſie to the Apoſtles themſelves, nor did they underſtand thereby any principality intended for S. *Peter*; as appears by ſundry contentions among them, after theſe words were ſpoken, who ſhould be the Chiefeſt.

Nor can the Antient Fathers, Good men, diſcover any ſuch Energy or Prerogative in them for S. *Peter*, or the Pope. For our Saviour doth not plainly and literally affirm that he will build his Church upon S. *Peter*, but upon the Rock which he confeſs'd: ἐπὶ ταύτῃ τῇ Πέτρᾳ, upon this Rock: not ἐπὶ τούτῳ τῷ Πέτρῳ, upon this *Peter*. *Non dictum eſt illi, Tu es* Petra, *ſed Tu*

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& Petrus: Petra *autem erat Christus*. It was not said to him, Thou art the Rock, but Thou art *Peter*: for the Rock was Christ: says *S. Augustin*, *Retract. l. c.* 21. The same Father in his 124 *Tract. on S. Joh. & Ser.* 13. *de Ver. Dom.* thus paraphrases this Text: *Upon this Rock which thou hast confessed; upon this Rock which thou hast acknowledg'd*, (saying, *Thou art Christ the Son of the Living God*) *will I build my Church*: that is, upon my self, the Son of the Living God will I build my Church: I will build Thee upon Me, not Me upon Thee. For the Rock was Christ, whereon *Peter* himself was built. I am punctual in citing this Great Doctor and Father of the Church, because the *Romanists* give out that they desire to stand to the alone Judgment of this Learned Father.

The Holy Martyr S. *Cyprian* could not apprehend any such Intrigue in these words. *l. de Unit. Eccles. The rest of the Apostles*, saith he, *were the same that* Peter *was, being endowed with an equal share both of Honour and Power.*

Nor S. *Ambrose*, *Serm.* 66. *S.* Peter *and* Paul *were eminent among the Apostles, and it is doubtful which is to be preferred before the other.*

S. Hilary. l. 6. de Trin. S. Chrysost. hom. 55. *in Matth. Euseb. Emissen. Greg. the Great. V. Beda. Haymo, the Gloss of Gratian, Lyra*, and a multitude of others, understand the Text of S. *Matthew*, as S. *Augustin* doth. Cardinal *Cusanus l.* 2. *c.* 13. *Concord. Cath.* is very positive, that nothing was here said to S. *Peter*, but what was said to the rest of the Apostles And the words of *Sixtus Senensis*, a very Learned Pontifician, *Biblioth. l.* 6. are worth our notice. *We believe and acknowledge with a sure faith, that Christ is the first and Chief Foundation of the Whole Ecclesiastical Edifice: But we also affirm that upon this Foundation there are other Rocks lay'd, namely* Peter *and the rest of the Apostles, whom* John *in the Apocalypse names the Twelve Foundations of the Heavenly Jerusalem.*

In sum, I find three Interpretations of these words among the Antients: *viz.* That Christ is the Rock: That the Confession, Faith and Doctrine of Christ is the Rock; and that S. *Peter* himself as an Apostle, is Metonymically a partial Rock. All which meanings agree very well together, but nothing favour the Supremacy that the *Romanists* desire.

Nor do the Protestants deny S. *Peter* a *Primacy* of Authority and Spiritual Jurisdiction over the Church as an Apostle: or in respect of his Fellow Apostles a *Primacy* of Order, Calling, Graces, Gifts, Courage, &c. or that he was a Ministerial Rock. But since the Rock and the Keys signifie the same thing, to wit, the power of Binding and Loosing; which *Matth.* 18. 18. is expressly promised to all the Apostles; and the same words, of Binding and Loosing are there used, which were before to S. *Peter*: and after the Resurrection, *John* 20. 21. the same power was amply bestowed on all the Apostles equally, and their Successors: He breathed on his Disciples, saying: *As my Father sent me, even so send I you; Receive you the Holy Ghost, Whose sins you retain they are retained, and whose sins you remit they are remitted*; so that no mans Jurisdiction came from *Peter* to him, but every one had it alike and equally from

our Saviour, who ſent him: and ſince S. *Paul* aſſures us *Epheſ.* 2. 20. *That we are built upon the Foundation of the Apoſtles* (in general) *and Prophets: Jeſus Chriſt himſelf being the Chief Corner-ſtone:* and S. *Anſelm* well comments on S. *Matth.* 16. *This power was not given alone to* Peter, *but as* Peter *anſwered one for all, ſo in* Peter *he gave this Power to all:* This Text will not evince S. *Peter* to have been Conſtituted the Univerſal Monarch of Chriſts Church: Nor in the whole Series of Divine Hiſtory do we meet with any Monarch-like Action of his Recorded.

But on the contrary, we read that He was ſent as a Meſſenger by the reſt of the Apoſtles, *Act.* 8. 14. That he gave the Right Hand to S. *Paul* and *Barnabas. Galat.* 2. 9. That he was accuſed to the other Diſciples, pleaded his cauſe before them, and ſubmitted to their Judgment. *Acts.* 11. 1. *&c.* And that S. *Paul* withſtood him to his face, finding that he walk'd not uprightly according to the truth of the Goſpel. *Galat.* 2. 11, 14.

Thus far they think this Soveraignty was only promiſed. In S. *Joh.* 21. 17. where Chriſt ſaid to *Peter, Feed my ſheep:* they teach that this power was abſolutely delivered and confirmed.

But neither was this charge ſo lay'd on S. *Peter*, that the reſt were excluded. For they grant that no more was here Given, than what was Promiſed, *Matth.* 16. where the Keys are mentioned. Now we have evidently proved that all the Apoſtles were equal in the power of the Keys; and that thoſe words concern S. *Peter* no more than the other Diſciples.

In Scripture phraſe the word, *Feed*, when it is accommodated to Eccleſiaſtical Functions, is the ſame as to *Teach.* They ſhall *Feed* them with knowledge and underſtanding, ſaies the Prophet *Jeremy.* And then we ſhall find the ſame Command and Commiſſion given to all the Apoſtles. *Matth.* 28. 19. *Go and Teach all Nations*, &c. Beſides, ſince All the Apoſtles had before been ſent as Shepherds to *Feed* the Flock. *Matth.* 9. 36. *&* 10. 6. and were afterwards furniſhed with more full Inſtructions, and Abilities to the ſame end, *Matth.* 28. *John* 20. which they executed moſt diligently and Couragiouſly, as appears by their Acts and Epiſtles; no man can reaſonably deny but that *paſce Oves, Feed my ſheep*, belong'd to them as well as to S. *Peter*: and they themſelves gave the ſame Duty in Charge to other Paſtors. *Act.* 20. 28. *Take heed to your ſelves and to all the Flock, over which the Holy Ghoſt hath made you Overſeers, to* Feed *the Church of God which he hath purchaſed with his own blood.* Neither would S. *Peter* ingroſs this privilege to himſelf, but communicated it to others. 1 *Pet.* 5. 2. *Feed the Flock of God that is among you.* S. *Cyprian de Unit. Eccleſ.* ſpeaks home *They are all Paſtors, but the Flock is one, which by one conſent is fed by all the Apoſtles.* And S. *Chryſoſtom l.* 2. *de Sacerdotio, Our Saviour at that time intended to teach both* Peter *and Us, how dear his Church is to him*, &c.

This is a True, Short and Plain Account of S. *Peter*'s Authority; both what was given him by our Saviour, and what was exerciſed by himſelf. But, alas,

alas, this is too ſcant for his pretended Succeſſour, as we ſhall now manifeſt.

And I ſhall be a little more exact in this *Seaſonable Argument*, becauſe that I know many of our *Engliſh* Roman Catholicks will not believe that this Vaſt, Unlimited Power is owned by their Church; but is onely the product of the Flattery of private Doctors, and the Pope's particular Paraſites.

I will onely mention how the Uſurpings, Innovations and Incroachments of the *Roman* Biſhops have been conſtantly oppoſed by the Greateſt part of Chriſtendom in all Ages.

In the firſt General Council of *Nice*, he was confined to his own particular Diſtrict; as the Patriarch of *Alexandria* and others were to theirs. In the firſt General Councils of *Conſtantinople* and *Epheſus*, the Provinces of the World were diſtinguiſhed, and the Patriarchs reſtrained to their own Circuits; and He of *Conſtantinople* is by name made Equal to Him of *Rome* in all Eccleſiaſtical Matters. He of *Rome* had indeed the Chief Honour; but that conſiſted not in Juriſdiction, but in ſitting in the firſt place, and ſuch like Titles.

The Council of *Chalcedon* confirms the ſame Decrees, and adds withal, 'Our Fathers gave the Privileges to the Seat of Elder *Rome*; becauſe that City 'had the Empire: and the 150 Biſhops aſſembled at the Council of *Conſtan-* 'tinople moved with the ſame reaſon, gave the ſame Privilege to the moſt Sa- 'cred Throne of New *Rome*: thinking it reaſonable, that the City which is 'honoured with the Empire and Senate, ſhould alſo have *Equal* Privileges 'with Elder *Rome*, and in Eccleſiaſtical Matters be advanced *alike* with her. Another Council at *Conſtantinople* Enacted the ſame. But the Council of *Carthage*, *Anno* 418. conſiſting of 217 Biſhops, is moſt Worthy of our Remark.

In this Council, when *Sozymus* Biſhop of *Rome* claimed a Right to receive Appeals from all parts of the World, and pretended a Canon of the *Nicene* Council that ſhould give it him: the Biſhops ſtrongly debated the Matter, and having ſearched the Original Copies of the *Nicene* Council, whereby the Untruth of his Claim was diſcovered, they wrote ſharply to him, not to meddle any more with their Provinces, nor admit into his Fellowſhip ſuch as they had Excommunicated. Telling him he had nothing to do in their Cauſes, either to bring them to *Rome*, or to ſend Legats to hear them at home: and that this pretence of his was expreſly againſt the *Nicene* Council.

The Evidence of this Great Teſtimony ſtands to this day unanſwerable by the *Roman* Party. It is abundantly known how Pope *Stephen* was ſleighted by S. *Cyprian*; and *Victor* by the Biſhops of the Eaſt. But this is an Infinite Theme, and I muſt not forget my promiſed Brevity.

I ſhall onely Requeſt the Gentlemen of the *Roman*-Catholick Perſuaſion, ſeriouſly to lay to heart what Trivial Grounds this Grand Article of their Church, the Pope's Supremacy, even in Eccleſiaſtical Affairs, is founded upon; and to conſider how many Difficulties muſt be cleared to make it a *probable Tale*. 1. That S. *Peter* was Biſhop of *Rome*. 2. That he dyed at *Rome* by the ſpecial Command of Chriſt. 3. That he dyed Inveſted with ſuch a

Supremacy, as is now Exercised in that Church. 4. That his so dying there is sufficient (without a new Revelation from God) to make the Succession of the Bishop of *Rome* of Divine Authority.

We shall now take a View of that *Grand Machine* of the Pope's power over Temporal Princes, and make it most evident, that it is an Article and Doctrin of the *Roman* Church; and being so, that this alone were a sufficient Motive to forsake her Communion, since She Teaches, Justifies and strictly Commands (even under the penalty of being accounted no Christians) Treason and Rebellion. The present Lord Bishop of *Lincoln* hath written a Learned and Satisfactory Treatise on this Subject, and I find his Lordship very faithful in his Citations. Wherefore I may be the more sparing.

However, because I heartily desire, that Honoured, Pious and Loyal Persons may not unwarily ingage their Liberties, Estates and Lives for the Maintainance of so Extravagant and Tyrannical a Power, which hath in all Ages caused so many dismal Tragedies in the Christian World, and is in it self Fatal and Destructive to all Civil Government, I shall briefly treat of this Matter, to undeceive others: especially since I was herein miserably seduced my self, till I had Maturely and Exactly Examined the whole Business.

I shall begin with General Councils, whose Decrees if they will not admit, I confess I as yet understand not what the Doctrin of the *Roman* Church is, nor do I know where to find it.

The Third Council of *Lateran*, c. 27. after it had Condemned and Excommunicated many Hereticks, (and you must know that All Protestants are both accounted so, and as such, are once every year solemnly accursed by His Holyness in Person on *Maundy Thursday*:) It Absolves All that had sworn Fidelity or Homage to them, from those Oaths (*and we know who they are, to whom Fidelity and Homage, strictly speaking, is due:*) and they are required in Order to the Remission of their Sins, *to fight* against them. And those who dye doing Penance in that manner, may undoubtedly expect Indulgence for their Sins, with Eternal Rewards. Then by the Authority of S. *Peter* and *Paul*, the Council remits to all who shall *rise and fight* against them, two years penance.

Here a General Council uses all its Industry to poyson people with Rebellious Doctrin, and calls Treason, *Doing of Penance*. Not long after, Pope *Celestin*, Predecessor to *Innocent the Third*, with more than *Luciferian* Arrogance, sets the Crown on the Head of the Emperour *Henry* the 6th with his two feet, and then kicks it off again. And the fact is produced by no meaner a Person than Cardinal *Baronius*, to shew that it is in the Pope's power to *Give* and *Take away* Empires. But to as much purpose as He produced that Text, *Rise Peter, Kill and Eat*; to incense *Paul the 5th* against the *Venetians*.

The second Evidence shall be the Fourth Great, and, as they call it, Most General Council of *Lateran*, wherein were assembled 1200 of one sort or other. These, C. 3. make a Decree, 'That the Aid of Secular Princes should be,

'be required for the Rooting out of Hereticks (i. e, *All that are not of the* '*Roman Communion*) and that when the Temporal Lord, required and admo-'niſhed by the Church, ſhall neglect to purge his Territory from Heretical 'Wickedneſs, He ſhall be Excommunicated by the Metropolitan and his Suf-'fragans. And if he perſiſt in neglecting to give ſatisfaction for the ſpace of 'a year, let him be ſignified to the Pope, that he from thenceforth may pro-'nounce his Subjects diſcharged from their Obedience, and expoſe his Ter-'ritory to be ſeized on by Catholicks, who having exterminated the Here-'ticks, ſhall poſſeſs it without Contradiction, and preſerve it in the Purity of 'the Faith. So as no Injury be done to the Right of the Supreme Lord, where 'there is ſuch; provided He do not any ways oppoſe himſelf. And the Law 'is to take place in them who have no Superiour Lord.——Which Laſt Clauſe perfectly comprehends Soveraign Princes, and ſo anticipates that Reply which ſome make, That the Decree was only made for Feudatory and Subordinate Princes.

And whereas ſome few deny it to be a General Council, and that it made any Canons; it is a moſt Impudent Cavil. For both the Council and Canons have been and are Univerſally received by the Roman Church: the Council as General, and Approved ſo by *Innocent* the III. and the Canons as Authentick. All their Writers concerning Councils put this down among the General ones, and commonly call it the *Great General Council of* Lateran: and *Joverius* ſays, he cannot ſee with what face a Man dare deny it. They always put it among thoſe Councils that are Approved by the Church: for you muſt know that ſome are Reprobated, ſome are partly Approbated and partly Reprobated. Their Canon Law ſo eſteems of it. The Council of *Conſtance* puts it among thoſe General Councils, to the Obſervation whereof the Popes were to ſwear at their Inſtallment. The Council of *Trent*, which I hope none will boggle at, *Seſſ* 24. *C.* 5. in expreſs terms calls it a *General Council*, and Confirms one of its Canons. To which I may add, becauſe it concerns us, a Synod at *Oxford*, where this Council was received for *England*. And though ſome Princes that were depoſed out of the Pope's meer Spite and Malice, got ſome Advocates to write for them, and Synods of Biſhops to Proteſt againſt the Pope's Proceedings: yet in the caſe of *Pretended Hereſie*, (which neerly touches Proteſtant Princes) not one Writer or Biſhop appears in Vindication of the Temporal Power. A ſhrewd Sign that this Depoſing Heretical Magiſtrates, is in General the Romiſh Doctrine.

The General Council of *Lions* is next. It was ſummoned by *Innocent* the 4th, againſt the Emperour *Frederick* the 2d. Here the Pope having conſulted with the Council, Declares the Emperour deprived by God of his Dominions: and thereupon they *Actually Depoſe him*, and *Abſolve* All from their Oaths of Fidelity to him: ſtrictly charging All perſons to acknowledge him no more for Emperour, and denouncing All that did otherwiſe, Excommunicated *Ipſo facto*. So we have another whole General Council concurring with the

Pope

Pope in asserting this *Deposing Power*, and with Candles burning in their hands, thundering out Sentence against the poor Emperour.

In the Council of *Constance*, *Sess.* 19. we often meet with this Clause, 'That 'All Breakers of their Privileges, whether Emperours, Kings, or any other 'Degree, were thereby *Ipso facto* subjected to the Banns, Punishments and 'Censures in the Council of *Lateran*: and *Sess.* 17. in the Pass they gave to the King of *Arragon*, they decree, That whatsoever Person, either King, Cardinal, *&c.* hinder him in his Journey, he is *Ipso facto* deprived of all Honour, Dignity, Office or Benefice, whether Ecclesiastical or Secular.

It is true, with much Importunity and Danger, *Gerson* procured a Decree in this Council, that No Subject should Murder his Prince. But that Practice was only condemned in such as did it, *without waiting the Sentence of any Judge whatsoever.* So that if Sentence be past by the Spiritual Judge, notwithstanding this Decree, a Prince may be Assassinated. But there is a further Mystery in it. For a King once declared to be no more such, *i. e.* being Deposed, He then becomes a Rebel and an Usurper, according to their Principles, and then it is lawful to kill him.

The Council of *Siena* confirms all the former Decrees made against Hereticks; and the Favourers of Heresie are declared liable to all Pains and Censures of Hereticks: and consequently to the Greatest of them, *viz.* Deposition.

The Council at *Basil* ratifies the Decree of *Constance*, by which, Emperours and Kings, that presumed to hinder any from coming to the Council, are subjected to Excommunication, Interdicts, and other Punishments Spiritual and Temporal.

Finally, the *Council of Trent*, though the world was then much changed, and they durst not trample on Crowned Heads as formerly, yet they would still be nibling at this sweet Morsel, as near as they could, and still endeavoured, though covertly, to continue the Claim to this *Deposing Authority.* For in the Decree against Duels, *Sess.* 25. *c.* 19. they declare, *If any Emperours and Kings*, &c. *did assign a field for a Combate, they did thereby lose their Right to that place, and the City, Castle, or other places about it.*

If Councils then, as surely they are, be fit deliverers of the Churches sence, we have here no less than seven General Councils to prove this to be the Churche's Doctrine. For my own part, I can see no ways they can extricate themselves, but either by Confessing their Church hath erred, or by obstinately going on in a most wretched Justification of such Damnable Tenents and Practices.

There is nothing more to do in this business, but by way of surplusage to give a General Touch at these following particulars.

By the *Book of the Sacred Ceremonies* (which is Authentick and of great Esteem with the Church of *Rome*) the Emperour as soon as he sees the Pope, must bare-headed, bow, till his knee touch the Ground, and worship the Pope: coming nearer he must bow again, and when he comes to the Pope he

he muſt bow a third Time, and devoutly kiſs the Pope's Toe. The ſame book informs us that the Pope never gives any Reverence to any Mortal, either by riſing up, or uncovering or bowing his head. That the Emperour muſt hold the Pope's ſtirrup till he gets on horſeback and then lead the Horſe for ſome paces. And ſome mean ſpirited Emperors have *de facto* performed theſe ſlaviſh offices.

The Emperour muſt ſwear *Fealty* to the Pope, and be his *Hector* to maintain all his Rights and Honours. That horrid *Extravagant of Boniface. VIII.* makes it abſolutely neceſſary to Salvation, that all Chriſtians be ſubject to the Pope; who hath *both the Swords*, and Judgeth all Men, and is Judged of None. And the Gloſs upon that Extravagant dares to ſay our Saviour had not done diſcreetly, unleſs he had left ſuch a Vicar behind him.

Bzovius an approved and applauded Author in that Communion, tells us the Pope is Monarch of All Chriſtians, Supreme over All Mortals, there lyes no Appeal from him, He is the great Arbitrator of the World.

Iſiodorus Moſconius, Vicar General to the Arch-Biſhop of *Bononia*, and a great Lawyer, terms the Pope the Univerſal Judge, King of Kings, Lord of Lords, and ſaies that God's Tribunal and the Pope's are one and the ſame, that they have the ſame Conſiſtory, and therefore all other powers are his Subjects, that the Pope is judged of none but God, not of the Emperour, Kings, Clergy or Laity.

Pope *Innocent* the Third, *Extra. de Major.* gives this deſcription of the Papal power, that it is as much greater than the Imperial, as the Sun is than the Moon. And the Gloſs ſaies that is 47 times greater: but the note in the Margin puts 57 times: nay there is an Author that adds 7744 times. This Decretal of *Innocent* the III. and the forecited Extravagant of *Boniface* VIII. are both put into the body of the Canon Law.

It would be endleſs to enumerate the *Romiſh* Authors that defend this prodigious power of depoſing Kings. *Bellarmin*, *Suarez*, *Sa*, *Mariana*, maintain and prove this Doctrine. Nor do I know one Jeſuit that teaches the contrary. And it is very well worth our notice what an odd kind of anſwer Mr. *Fiſher* gave to King *James*, who demanded of him what he thought Subjects ought to do in the caſe of the Pope's depoſing a Prince? The *Jeſuit* gives this ſly return: I will pray for Peace and Tranquillity between both Parties; I will exhort all to do good offices conducing thereto, and will rather dye than any wayes be acceſſory to your Majeſtie's death. And no more could be got from him but this *Compliment*. But elſe where he told the King, more plainly, that he diſclaimed any ſingular opinion of his own, or more than the Definitions of Councils and Conſent of Divines did force him to hold. And what thoſe are, we have pretty well diſcovered.

The Canoniſts, Caſuiſts and Schoolmen are *Generally*, if not *Univerſally*, of this opinion, ſome teach that it is evident to all, that Emperors are to be Deprived and Depoſed by the Pope, not onely for things pertaining to Faith, but

but for Manners. Others, that the Secular Power is subject to the Spiritual, and that it is no Usurpation, if the Spiritual judge the Secular: and that the Pope hath Supreme Power over Christian Kings and Princes and may Correct, *Depose* and *put others in their places*: that he may deprive a King of Royal Dignity for *Heresie, Schisme or any intolerable Crime, Negligence or Lazyness; if in great matters he break his Oath, or oppress the Church*, and several other Cases: and that the Pope himself is sole Judge both of the Crime and of the Condemnation. And *Bzovius de Pontifice, Rom. c.* 46. p. 611. gives us a Catalogue of above 30 Kings and Princes who have *de facto* been Deposed, or by Anathema's damn'd by the Pope. They count them Martyrs that dye for the maintaining this Power; which cannot be unless they Esteem it an Article of Faith. And we have a late Instance of *F. Paul Magdalen*, alias *Henry Heath*, a Learned and in his way Pious, *Franciscan*, who was put to death by the Long Parliament about the year 1643. Who just before his Execution being desired to give his Judgment of the Oath of *Allegiance* (which chiefly concerns our present purpose) declared it absolutely unlawful, and that he would as soon lay down his Life for the Refusal of it, as for any Article of the Roman Belief.

Eman. Sa is not ashamed to publish that if a Clergy Man rebell against his King it is no Treason, because Clergy men are not the Kings Subjects. *Aphorism. Confess. verbo Clericus.* Others, (though I will not say this is so generally taught) that Faith is not to be kept with *Hereticks*. And if my Memory fail not, the Famous *Navar* hath written a whole Tract in Defence of Equivocation and Mental Reservation, and takes upon him the Defence of the Noble Society of *Jesus*, as he calls them, for Universally teaching it: and to my knowledge practising it.

It were very Easy to collect these Corollaries out of the Canon Law, and the Decretal of *Boniface* the VIII. That Emperors and Kings are the Popes Subjects; that they may be Deposed for Heresie and any great Sin: that the Pope hath power over the whole World in Spirituals and Temporals, and that he hath this Temporal power in a more worthy, Superior and perfect manner than Temporal Princes: that Statutes made by Lay Men do not bind the Clergy: that it is necessary to Salvation to be subject to the Pope, and he who affirms the contrary is no Christian; without any hope or possibility of Salvation. *A most Pious and Charitable Rhapsody of Canonical Theology!*

Now you must understand that this Canon Law is approved, received and obeyed in that Church, as The Rule of Justice in All their Courts and Consistories. In this we further learn, that the Holy Church by her frequent Authority, *absolves Subjects* from their Oaths to Superiors; and it exemplifies in Pope *Zachary*, who deposed the King of *France*, not so much for his Iniquity as for his Unprofitableness. And Cardinal *Turrecremata* in his Comment on this Canon proves that Subjects, if they have the Popes Consent may Depose their Kings.

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The Bulls of many Popes againſt the Princes both of our own and other Nations, are too well known, and may at any time be ſeen in the *Roman Bullary*.

To draw to a Concluſion in this Odious Matter. Our Country Man *Creſwell* the Jeſuite in his *Philopater. ſect.* 2. affirms, That it is the Opinion of *All* Catholicks, that Subjects are bound to Depoſe an Heretical King: that they are obliged by the Law of God, by the moſt ſtrict bonds of Conſcience and utmoſt peril of their Souls to do this. *Bellarmine de Rom. Pontif. l.* 5. *c.* 7. aſſures us, it is the Conſent of *All* Roman Catholicks, that Heretical Princes, *May* and *Ought* to be Deprived of their Dominions. And the *Engliſh* Cardinal *Allen*, ſpeaking how S. *Thomas* defended this Poſition, and how Cardinal *Tolet* expounds him, adds theſe words of his own (in his Anſwer to the Book of *Engliſh Juſtice*) Thus doth this Notable School-man write: Neither do we know *any Catholick Divine* of any Age to ſay the contrary.

If now, the Teſtimonies of their Own moſt eminent Writers, their eſtabliſhed Laws and Canons, their Authentick Papal Bulls and Decretal Conſtitutions, the Decrees and Canons of their own General Councils (the confeſs'd Repreſentatives of their whole Church) ſeconded by Actual Depoſing of Emperours *&c.* be not undeniable Evidence that this Seditious, Deſperate and Pernicious Doctrine, is the Doctrine of the *Roman* Church; I muſt humbly crave Pardon for my Ignorance in their Faith, and muſt ſo far diſown my ſelf from ever having Embraced, that I never underſtood their Doctrine, and conſequently never was a *Roman* Catholick.

But how Repugnant are theſe Poſitions to the Doctrine and Example of our Humble, Meek *Jeſus* and his Apoſtles? Learn of me for I am Meek and Lowly. The Son of man came not to be Miniſtred to, but to Miniſter. My Kingdom is not of this World. Man, who made me a Judge or Divider over you? *Luk.* 12. 14. If I your Lord and Maſter have waſhed your feet, *&c.* Render to *Cæſar* the things that are *Cæſar's*. And He himſelf paid Tribute to *Cæſar*, and made S. *Peter* do ſo too. He ſubmitted to the Power and Juriſdiction of *Pilate*, who was *Cæſar's* Deputy. And this not *quia deerant Vires*, becauſe he wanted power to reſiſt (as *Bellarmine* fondly affirms of the Primitive Chriſtians:) for He could have called for more than 12 Legions of Angels. Nay ſo far was He from granting the *Two Swords*, ſo much boaſted of, to S. *Peter*, that he ſeverely checks him for making Uſe of *one*. And the Two Princes of the Apoſtles, as they are ſtyled, S. *Peter* and *Paul*, were perfectly of their Maſter's temper in this point. The former would not permit a Common Centurion to fall down at his feet, *Act.* 10. 25. and his Doctrine was far different from his Succeſſors at *Rome*, 1 *Pet.* 2. 13. *Submit your ſelves to every Ordinance of man for the Lord's ſake: Whether it be to the King, as Supreme.* &c. *Fear God, Honour the King.* S. *Paul* preaches the very ſame. *Rom.* 13 1. &c. *Let every Soul be ſubject to the Higher Powers, &c. For he bears not the Sword in vain. Wherefore you muſt needs be ſubject not only for Wrath, but for Conſcience ſake.* And in matter of Juriſdiction he expreſly *Appeals* to the Judgment Seat of *Nero* the Emperour.

And till the Myſtery of Iniquity had gained Head, the *Roman* Popes themſelves

ſpake in a different Dialect from what they now uſe. We were in hopes, ſays Pope *Leo*, *Ep.* 44. to the Emperour *Marcianus*, that your Clemency would have condeſcended ſo far as to have deferred the Council; but ſince You reſolve it ſhould be kept, I have ſent thither *Paſchaſine*. Pope *Stephen* ſpeaks thus to another Emperour, Hath not the *Roman* Church ſent her Legats to the Council when you *Commanded* it? We offer theſe things to your Piety, ſays Pope *Hadrian* to the Emperour *Baſilius*, with all Humility, *& veluti præſentes Genibus Advolvi*, as if we were preſent before you on our Knees.

Having thus as briefly as the matter would permit, diſpatched what was chiefly in my Deſign of penning this Diſcourſe, and what had the greateſt Influence on the ſatisfying my own mind, I ſhall make much ſhorter work with what follows.

General Councils, when truly ſo, are highly venerated by Proteſtants, and the Four firſt, ſo much honoured by *S. Gregory the Great*, are better obſerv'd by the Church of *England*, than by that of *Rome*. Nor are we ſo ſevere as S. *Gregory Nazian. Ep.* 42. *ad Procop.* Who profeſſes he had never ſeen any good or Happy Iſſue of any of them: but look'd on them as the Increaſe rather than Remedy of the Churche's Evils. Which Cenſure is certainly true of thoſe Conventions which have been for diverſe Ages laſt paſt. No, we deſire nothing more than a Free, General Council to conclude differences in Religion: and are moſt ready to ſubmit to the Determinations of it, and yield the ſame Authority to it, which the Antient Church in the days of *Conſtantine* the Great, *Theodoſius*, &c. and which S. *Auguſtine* did.

And that we may not be ſlandered as being our own Judges, We only deſire it may be Qualified according to Cardinal *Cuſanus* his Doctrine. *Concord. Cath. l.* 2. Where he declares that a Compleat General Council conſiſts of All the Patriarchs and Principal Governours of the Univerſal Church. That a Council kept by the *Roman* Biſhop, and thoſe only who are ſubject to him, excluding others, is but a particular Council. That a General Council may be celebrated, though the Pope refuſe to concurr by his Preſence and Conſent. That All that meet in Councils, ought to have free Liberty, orderly to declare and Determin Maters in queſtion. That whatever muſt oblige as Divine, ought to be confirmed by the Authority of Holy Scripture. That no Councils are Legitimate, where private Reſpects are managed, under pretext of Faith and Religion. That the *Roman* Biſhop hath not that power, which many flatterers attribute to him: *viz.* That he alone is to Determine, and Others only to Conſult and Adviſe. That a General Council is Superiour to the reſt of the Patriarchs, and alſo to the *Roman* Biſhop. That a General Council may be deficient, and that *de facto* Councils lawfully aſſembled have erred.

And ſince they have failed, and have contradicted one another; as appears in the Second Council of *Nice*, and that of *Conſtance* among many others; the one Decreeing the Worſhip of Images, the other prohibiting Communion in both Kinds; againſt the expreſs words of Scripture; the Councils of *Lateran* in Depoſing Kings: the Council of *Frankfort* oppoſite to that of *Nice* in the Buſineſs

of

of Images: the Council of *Florence* against those of *Basil* and *Constance*, in the point of the Pope's Superiority over a Council; It is certain that Councils are to be Regulated and Examined by God's Word, and to be Received or Rejected as Conformable to, or Disagreeing from that. And for this we have the Authority of the Great S. *Augustin*, *contra Maxim. Arian. l.3.c.* 14. *Nec ego Nicenum, &c.* Neither ought I to produce the *Nicen*, nor Thou the *Ariminum* Council, as having already prejudged or absolutely Determined the Cause, beyond all Appeal. For I am not bound up by the Authority of this, nor Thou by the Decree of that; but let us regard the Authority of the Holy Scripture; witnesses not partial or appropriated to either party, but common to both. A speech worthy the Gravity, Learning, and Piety of S. *Augustin*.

As for the Councils of the Later Centuries, they neither have been General, nor hath either their *Assembling* or *Proceeding* been Lawful; and they have most Industriously thwarted the Canons of the most Pure and Antient Councils.

Their Assembling hath not been Legal, in that the Modern Popes have Usurped the whole Right and Authority of Convocating Councils contrary to the Primitive Custom and Practice of the Church. The first *Nicene* Council was called by *Constantine* the Great; the first *Constantinopolitan*, which is the second General Council, by *Theodosius*; that of *Ephesus*, by *Theodosius* Junior; that of *Chalcedon*, by *Martianus*; the fifth, by *Justinian*, &c. All which are such evident Proofs, that the Cardinals, *Cusanus*, *Jacobatius*, and *Zabarella* confess, that in the first Ages of the Church, the Right of Calling Councils belonged to the Emperour.

Nor are Their Proceedings any better. For the Popes admit no Assessours or Judges in Councils, but their own Faction, Men beforehand enslaved by a Solemn Oath (which all Bishops of that Communion take at their Consecration) to maintain the *Regalia Petri*, all the Usurpations of that See. The Pope is the only Authentick Judge in All matters, Approving and Refusing whatever He pleases.

Their own Histories afford us Examples enough to confirm this. I shall instance but in the Sleights and Wiles of the Late so much cryed up *Trent-Council*. Wherein, to make sure work, on the Pope's side there were more Italian Bishops than of all the World beside. And most ridiculously to dazle the eyes of the People, some of these subscribe themselves Eastern Patriarchs, as of *Jerusalem*, &c. and Others as if they were Greek Prelates. Some had the Titles of Archbishops, who had neither Church nor Diocess; as *Upsalensis* and *Armachanus*, who were Created on purpose to fill up the Number. And when the Pope on a certain Occasion wanted Voices to sway the cause, He sent a fresh supply of 40 Bishops newly made. And this was part of that Leigerdemain, which an Eminent French Bishop, *Claud. Espenc.* one of those who sat in the Council, calls *the Great* Helena *which of late Ruled All at* Trent. *in Ep. ad Tit. c.* 1.

All the Oriental and Greek Patriarchs and Bishops were Excluded: None out of *England*, *Scotland*, *Ireland*, *Denmark*, *Swedland*; few out of *France* and *Spain*; fewer out of *Germany* it self, were admitted. When the Protestants required

Audience, they could not be hearken'd to, upon any tolerable terms. It was long before they could get a Safe-Conduct; and when it was procured, it was clogg'd with this Clauſe, *That it ſhould belong to none, but ſuch as would Repent and Return to the Boſom of the Roman Church.* This Partiality and Jugling when the Princes of *Europe* ſaw, they ſent their Proteſtations againſt the Council, as being Inſufficient to Reform Religion.

In Trying and Deciding Controverſies, they adhered more to Tradition than Scripture: and paſs'd nothing till the Pope with his Conſiſtory had ſeen it at home, and approved it; and then he tranſmitted it to his Legats. So that, as One ſaid; the Holy Ghoſt was continually poſted in Cloakbags between *Rome* and *Trent*. (Though, by the way, their own Doctors teach that the Aſſiſtance of the Holy Ghoſt is a perſonal Privilege and cannot be Delegated.) While the Divines were formally Diſputing at *Trent*, the Pope was as buſie in Ingroſſing Canons at *Rome*, and ſending them to the Council to be publiſhed. Thus they proceeded, ſometimes by a wrong Rule, ſometimes by none at all. In the 4th Seſſion they Decree, That none ſhould give any other Expoſition of Scripture, than ſuch as might agree with the Doctrine of the Church of *Rome*. And yet this very Doctrine was the Thing queſtioned, and the Scriptures were to have been the Touchſtone to try it by.

Take this whole Affair in the Words of *Andreas Duditbius*, a Biſhop in the Roman Church, and an Eminent Member of this Council. He thus writes in an Epiſtle to the Emperour *Maximilian* the 2d, What good could be done in that Council, where voices were taken by Number, and not by Weight? The Pope was able to ſet an 100 of his againſt every one of ours; and if an 100 were not ſufficient, he could on a ſudden have created a thouſand to ſuccour thoſe that were ready to faint. We might every day ſee hungry and needy Biſhops, and thoſe for the moſt part Beardleſs Youngſters, come in Flocks to *Trent*, hired to give their Voice according to the Pope's humour: unlearned indeed and fooliſh, but of good Uſe to him for their Audaciouſneſs and Impudency The Holy Ghoſt had nothing to do with that Conventicle. All things were carried by Humane Policy, which was wholly employed in Maintaining the Immoderate, and indeed moſt Shameleſs Lordſhip and Domineering of the Pope. From thence were Anſwers waited for, as from the Oracles of *Delphos* or *Dodona*. From thence the Holy Ghoſt, who, as they brag, was Preſident of their Council, was ſent ſhut up in Carriers Budgets, who (a thing worthy to be laugh'd at) when the Waters were up, as it falls out many times, was fain to ſtay till they were down again, before he could repair to the Council. By this means it came to paſs, that the *Spirit was not carried on the Waters*, as in *Geneſis*, but along beſides the Waters, &c.

Nothing is more talk'd of than the Infallibility of the Church of *Rome*: and this I know to be a moſt tempting Bait to get Proſelytes; eſpecially amidſt thoſe Many Diſſentions in the Chriſtian World at this Day. But becauſe this Pretext hath been utterly deſtroyed by the Lord *Falkland*, Mr. *Chillingworth*, and other moſt Learned Pens, I will only Recommend this Single Conſideration to All Judicious Roman Catholicks, who would not be chouced out of their Wits, Eſtates

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and Liberties by a Gang of Eccleſiaſtical Mountebanks, *viz.* That this Huge, Swelling Prerogative of Infallibility is ſo Senſleſs a Thing, ſo Ungrounded, that no Romaniſt according to his own Principles, can have ſo much as a probable Moral Aſſurance of that wherein he thinks himſelf Infallible. And unleſs every one in particular be Infallible, it is to little purpoſe to boaſt of an Infallible Judge. For a Man may as well miſtake the Meaning of his Sentence, as the Sentence of one who proceeds only upon prudent Moral Aſſurance: and we ſee that thouſands do erre in the Interpretation of thoſe acknowledged Infallible Oracles, the Holy Scriptures.

The Conſideration I recommend is this. That after All the Stirr that is made about Infallibility, the Learnedeſt amongſt them knows not where to meet with it; nor in what caſes it is annexed to that Chair, in what it forſakes it. Some, as the Jeſuits generally, will have it in the Pope: but then whether with his Cardinals, or by Himſelf is controverted very briskly. Others will have it in a General Council: and this Opinion is backt by no leſs Authority than the Councils of *Baſil* and *Conſtance*. But then the Church hath been very long without it, and poſſibly may never injoy it by means of a General Council to the End of the World. That wherein they fix it with moſt plauſibility is both the Pope and a Council together. But even here we are at a great many loſſes. For as to the Pope, no man can be aſſured of his being a true Pope; conſidering the various defects that may render him otherwiſe; as a fundamental Error in his Election, Simoniacal Induction, the female Sex, Want of true Baptiſm and Holy Orders, both which depend upon the Intention and Validity of thoſe, from whom he receives them; and theirs upon the like Qualifications in their Predeceſſors, *&c.* Occult Hereſie and Many others. And then as to a Council, which conſiſts chiefly of Biſhops (tho the Popes, for ſome ends beſt known to themſelves have now pack'd in Cardinals, Abbots, Generals of Orders, *&c.*) beſides that, the Validity of a Council depends upon the uncertainty of the Pope's being truly Qualified; the very ſame Difficulties occur in every particular Member, as did in reſpect of the Pope himſelf. The like uncertainty appears in every Sacrament adminiſtred in that Church, ſome whereof are abſolutely neceſſary, both *Neceſſitate Medii & Præcepti*. v. g. in Baptiſm, Abſolution, Conſecration of the Hoſt, which if it be not duly performed, Idolatry is committed by the People in adoring it, even by their own Conceſſions. *Azorius* the Jeſuit, *Enchirid.* c. 8. openly proclaims, That it is a more tolerable Error in them who worſhip Golden and Silver Statues, as the Gentiles did their Gods; nay, a piece of red Cloth on the top of a Spear, as the Laplanders are reported to do, than in thoſe who adore a piece of Bread.

And now I would fain know of a Lay-Roman-Catholick, what is become of his Infallibility, where it is, and to what purpoſe it ſerves him? No where is it to be found, as I know of, but in the bold Aſſertion of every pragmatical Confeſſor, Who bids you be ſure to look to your Faith; (who are the Solifidians now?) to believe as the Church believes, and then all is ſafe; for the breach of the Ten Commandments, there are Merits and Indulgences enough in the Church, which being mixt with a little Attrition and Confeſſion will do the work.

work. Though in the mean while He himſelf can neither tell where this Infallible Church is, nor what ſhe certainly believes.

Methinks S. *Paul* ſpoke as much like a *Prophet* as an *Apoſtle*: as if he foreſaw the Haughtineſs of the Members of that Church to which he wrote. And therefore to curb them and baniſh from their Minds all ſuch vain conceits of Infallibility, he tells the Church of *Rome* ſhe ſtood on no firmer grounds than her Neighbours. His words are theſe, worthy to be had in everlaſting Remembrance by All Roman-Catholicks. *Rom.* 11.18,19, *Boaſt not againſt the Branches, &c. Well: becauſe of unbelief they were broken off; and Thou ſtandeſt by Faith. Be not high-minded, but fear. For if God ſpared not the natural branches, take heed leſt he alſo ſpare not Thee. Behold therefore the Goodneſs and Severity of God: on them which fell, Severity, but towards Thee Goodneſs; if Thou continue in his Goodneſs: otherwiſe Thou alſo ſhalt be cut off.* Which words need rather your Practice than my Paraphraſe.

How much Safer and more Satisfactory is it to rely on the Holy Scriptures themſelves; which by all Sides are acknowledged Infallible? For as much as they were divinely Inſpired by that great Infallible Truth, which neither can be deceived, nor deceive his Creatures; which can make you wiſe enough to Salvation, and who hath promiſed to every humble Petitioner, and devout Practiſer, a ſufficient Competency of Knowledge, in what is neceſſary for his preſent Condition and Eternal Happineſs.

Now all this you will find abundantly provided for in the Doctrine and Conſtitutions of the Church of *England*.

Here is the Word of God faithfully Tranſlated, and exactly, as far as the Idiomes of Languages will permit, compared with the Originals: and All thoſe Books received, of whoſe Authority there was never any doubt made in the Church. Some others called *Apocryphal*, are read indeed; but as *Ruffinus* in *Expoſit. Symboli*, ſpeaks, *non ad Fidem firmandam ſed ad Mores Inſtruendos*: Not for confirming Faith, but for direction of Manners. And they are excluded from the Canon upon very weighty Reaſons. For that they were never committed as of Divine Authority to the *Jews*: to whom the Oracles of God were intruſted, *Rom.* 3.2. Nor are they to be found in the Hebrew Canon. They are never found cited by Chriſt or his Apoſtles: and in ſome places they contain things manifeſtly falſe, contradictory both to themſelves & the other Genuine Prophetical Writers.

You have here the three Creeds, the Apoſtles, that of the *Nicene* Council, and that of S. *Athanaſius*: together with the four firſt General Councils, which repreſent to us the Sincere Scheme of Apoſtolical, Primitive Doctrine and Diſcipline.

You have here good works Recommended, Preach'd and Practiced, as the Fruits of Faith and Evidences of our Juſtification: and though not as Expiatory for our Sins, yet as in Obedience to the Divine commands, and as a Sacrifice acceptable to God. And even in this Degenerate Age of Chriſtianity it might be made to appear, that as many Acts and Monuments of Real Charity have been exhibited ſince the Reformation, as were in many Ages before. But

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for those Works of *Supererrogation*, as they are called, whereby we are presumed to perform more than is our Duty, this Church worthily disowns them, as savouring of too much Pride and self Conceitedness in us, who at the best are but unprofitable Servants.

You have here a just and Competent Authority allowed to the Church, of appointing Decent Rites and Ceremonies, and of determining Controversies in Religion: provided she decide nothing Repugnant to the Holy Scripture. And the *Apostles* themselves challenged no more, Witness S. *Paul*: *Be ye followers of me as I am of Christ.*

You have here a *Lawful Call* to and *Succession* in the Ministerial Function (and this Succession, if need were, may be shewn to be more *Sincere* and less *Interrupted* than that in the *Roman* Church.) As likewise those *Three* most Antient degrees of *Bishops*, *Priests* and *Deacons*: and the manner of their Ordination most conformable to God's Word and Primitive Constitutions and Practice.

You have here all the Divine Services and Administration of the Sacraments, performed in the known Vulgar Tongue of the Country, to the Edification of the People, and according to Divine Precept. On which Subject S. *Paul* hath written a whole Chapter, 1 *Cor.* 14. no ways reconcilable to the Practice of the *Roman* Church: which herein is confessed to disagree with Antiquity, by the most Learned of our Adversaries, and many of them wish that the Custome were abolished. Nor doth their *Common Plea* avail; that God understands any Language: for many parts of their Service are addressed to the People, and not to God: as the Instructions out of the Epistles and Gospels, *Orate Fratres*, &c. and many Occurrencies in the Administration of the Sacraments.

Here you will find the *two great Sacraments* of the New Law, *Baptism* and the *Sacred Eucharist*. The first never so much as questioned by our Adversaries as to its Validity. And the other Administred in the due *Matter* and *Form* of Divine Institution; and that *intirely*, without committing that *Grand Sacrilege* of taking away the Cup from the Layity. And if the Church of *England* Embrace all that is *Really* conveyed to us in those High Mysteries, *viz.* The Application of those Ineffable Benefits and Advantages of the *Sacred Body* and *Blood* of Christ; it is as much as every Good Christian can desire, and enough, if duly received, to make him Happy.

And as for that Wonderful Doctrin of *Transubstantiation*, we have the *Romanists* own Acknowledgment, that it was not believed in that Church till the Councel of *Lateran*, which likewise *Decreed the Deposing of Kings*: and I am sure the Church of *England* hath *Scripture*, *Antiquity*, *Reason*, and the concurring Testimony of *all our Senses*, when she acknowledges a *Real Presence* to the True Believer, without *Annihilating* the *Substance* of the *Elements*.

I am sure our Blessed Saviour at the Institution calls the whole Action a *Commemoration*: and in the Consecration of the Cup he most apparently uses a double Figure; both in the *Cup*, used for what is in it, and the *Testament*, for what is conveyed by it. He himself calls it the Fruit of the Vine. And S. *Paul*, 1 *Cor.* 11. 26. 27, 28. in 3 verses together expressly calls it *Bread* even after the Consecration.

ſecration; Whoever ſhall eat this *Bread*, &c. As often as ye eat this *Bread*, &c. Let a man examine himſelf and ſo let him eat of this *Bread*.

And whereas our Saviour ſaies *This is my Body*: to omit the multitude of Authorities that might be produced, let the great *S. Auguſtin* ſpeak the ſence of All Antiquity: *Chriſt* did not ſtick to ſay *This is my Body*, when he gave the *Sign of his Body*, in *Pſalm.* 98. and *de Doctrin. Chriſtian. l.* 3. *c.* 10. he lays down this notable Rule; If you find a Commandment that forbids a Crime, or injoins any good Action, then its ſenſe is not Figurative: but it is otherwiſe when it ſeems to command a Crime and prohibit a good Action. Except you eat the fleſh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you, ſaies *Chriſt*. That word ſeems to command a Crime: it is therefore a *Figure*; which bids us Communicate in the paſſion of our Lord, and call into our Memories with ſweetneſs and benefit, that his Fleſh hath been wounded and nailed on the Croſs for us.

Thus doth *S. Auguſtin* teach. And indeed nothing is more frequent in Holy Writ, than ſuch manner of Speech: *This is the Lord's Paſſover. I am the true Vine*, &c. But to examine this buſineſs fully, would require a juſt Volume, and it is already done by very able Pens.

The 5 other Sacraments in uſe in the *Roman* Church, are ſolemnly uſed by the Church of *England*, though not under that notion: excepting the Ceremony of *Anoynting*, which was a Miraculous guift of Healing peculiar to the *Apoſtles*.

In the Church of *England* you may injoy the true uſe and Advantage of *Confeſſion* and *Abſolution*, in a far more ſerious and leſs ſuſpicious manner than in the *Roman* Church. And as for *Abſolution*, even the *Form* of it is as full and Compleat as theirs. I will ſet it down here, as it is found in the Service for the Viſitation of the Sick.—— *Our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, who hath left power to his Church, to Abſolve all Sinners, who truly Repent and Believe in him, of his Great Mercy forgive thee thy offences: And by his Authority committed to me, I abſolve thee from all thy Sins; in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghoſt.*

Her Churches are decently kept and adorned, (at leaſt it is her deſire they ſhould be ſo) though not crowded with *Images*: the Hiſtorical uſe of which ſhe rejects not: but the Adoration of them ſhe worthily eſteems moſt Dangerous and Deteſtable. And truly for my own part, I think that Dr. *Stillingfleet*, now the Reverend Dean of S. *Pauls*, hath little leſs than *Demonſtrated* it to be Idolatry. Let any but impartially examin the general practice of the Church of *Rome*, eſpecially on *Good-Friday* in creeping to the Croſs: and he will find an undeniable proof of their *Adoring Images*. The Prieſt by degrees uncovers the Crucifix, lifts it upto be *Adored* with theſe words, *Ecce Lignum Crucis*, &c. *Behold the Wood of the Croſs, come let us Adore it.* Then firſt he himſelf, then all that are preſent, with three Proſtrations of the Body, even to the Kiſſing of the very Earth, approach to it, and with all Reverence Imaginable *Adore it.*

The Worſhip and Invocation of Saints and Angels, is here looked upon as at leaſt very Dangerous, and not having any Preſident in the Old or New Teſtament. S. *Paul* hath imparted his mind to us in this matter. *Coloſſ.* 2. 18. *Let no*

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man beguile you of your reward, in a voluntary humility, and worſhipping of Angels, intruding into theſe things which he hath not ſeen.

The Doctrines of *Merit*, *Indulgences*, *Purgatory*, &c. are preſumptuous at beſt, and full of Abuſes, contrived more for the Prieſts profit than the Penitents comfort. All which conſidered, together with the ſmall grounds for the belief of them, they are worthily diſowned by the Church of *England*. Nor was *Bellarmin*, when out of the heat of School Diſputes, of a Different Judgment, *l.* 5. *de Juſtif. c.* 7. *Propter incertitudinem*, &c. By reaſon of the Uncertainty of our own Juſtice and the Danger of Vain-Glory; *Tutiſſimum eſt*, &c. It is the ſafeſt courſe to repoſe all our Confidence in the alone Mercy and Benignity of God.

In ſhort, you will find that the Church of *England* in her Reformation, which was moſt Regular, and by the Supreme Authority of the Whole Nation, retains all the *Eſſentials* of Chriſtianity, and onely Rectified ſuch things as She found, and the whole World complained, were ſome Ridiculous, ſome Impious; Others Senſual and Cruel.

Such are the Innumerable Croſſings, Repetitions of Names, Kiſſings of the Pax and Images, Offering up of Incenſe and Candles, Impertinent Pilgrimages, &c. and a Thouſand the like abſurdities.

Such as teach men to put their Confidence in Bleſs'd Beads and Medals, Counterfeit Relicks, Confraternities, Sodalities; to truſt to *Mundayes* Prayers for the Dead, and our Ladie's Litanies: and Aſcribe to pieces of Wax called *Agnus Dei's*, Divine power and Efficacy, even as much as is due only to the *Pretious Blood of the Son of God*. Nor is this the belief and practice onely of a few Old Wives: but the *Authentick Book of the Sacred Ceremonies* of the *Roman* Church, tells us how *Urban* V. ſent three *Agnus Dei's* to the *Greek Emperor*, with moſt Blaſphemous Rythmes annexed concerning their Virtue. Amongſt others this is *Verbatim* ſet down, —— *Peccatum frangit ut Chriſti ſanguis et angit* —— that it Deſtroys Sin as the Blood of Chriſt doth.

And this was not the Practice of one Phantaſtical Pope alone, but according to the foreſaid *Book*, l. 1. Every Pope in bleſſing theſe *Agnus Dei's* uſes this Prayer. 'That it would pleaſe thee, O God, to bleſs theſe things, which we pur-'poſe to pour into this Veſſel of Water prepared for thy Name: ſo as by the 'Worſhip and Honour of them, we thy Servants may have our heinous offences 'done away, the blemiſhes of our Sins wiped off, and thereby we may obtain 'pardon, &c.

No Meaner a Perſon than the Angelical Doctor S. *Thomas Aquinas*, attributes the ſame Virtue of taking away Venial Sins, to *Holy Water*. And likewiſe 3. *qu.* 25. *a.* 3. in *c.* moſt Orthodoxly defends, That Stocks and Stones, I mean Images, are to be worſhipped with *Latria*, the *ſame Honour* that is due to the Creator. *Suarez* and *Vaſquez* teach the ſame.

To Conclude this Diſcourſe. In the Church of *England* You will meet with all that is *Good* and *Warrantable* in the Church of *Rome*; what ever is *Neceſſary* to Salvation: and that by the Confeſſion of the Learnedeſt *Romans*. Let *Bellar-*

min ſpeak for all. *l.4. de Verbo Dei. c.11.* 'The Apoſtles themſelves never uſed 'to Preach openly to the people (much leſs propounded as Articles of Faith) 'other things than the Articles of the Apoſtles Creed, the Ten Commandments, 'and ſome few of the Sacraments: becauſe, ſaies he, Theſe are ſimply *Neceſſary* 'and Profitable for All Men: the Reſt beſides are *Such, as that a Man may be* '*Saved without them.*

This made *Antonius de Dominis*, Archbiſhop of *Spalatto*, even at his Return to *Rome*, to acknowledg the *Engliſh Church* to be a *True Apoſtolical Church.* And Father *Fulgentio* the *Venetian*, Companion to Father *Paul*, the Famous Compiler of the Hiſtory of the Council of *Trent*, had a moſt High value and Tender Reſpect for this Church, as having in it all the Requiſites for Faith, Manners and Diſcipline. And that Incomparable Man, *Hugo Grotius*, had ſo Venerable an Affection for her, above all other Reformed Churches, that he told our Embaſſador in *France*, That he Intended after his Return from *Swedland*, whither he was deſigned Embaſſador from the *States General*, to tranſport himſelf with his whole Family hither, on purpoſe to dye in the Boſome of the *Engliſh* Church. In ſuch Repute is She even with Foreigners.

And to ſpeak one word to the *Roman Catholicks* of *England* even in their own Language. By their own Conceſſions, the Church of *England* is ſafer to Communicate with than that of *Rome.*

For, To Believe onely what is in the Scripture, is as much as is neceſſary, as *Bellarmin* Confeſſes. To worſhip God without an Image, is acknowledged by all both ſafe and acceptable. To pray immediately to God, and uſe the Lord's Prayer, without Repeating ſo many *Ave Maria's*; to perform the beſt works we can, and not ſtand on the point of Merit, *&c.* and ſo of the other matters in Controverſie, is by both Sides granted ſecure: Whereas the other Things in debate, are ſtrongly diſputed by very Learned and Pious Men. Now what would a Man require more than what all acknowledge to be in the Church of *England*: viz. Means effectually conducing and ſufficient to *Believe Well*, to *Pray Well*, to *Live Well*, and to *Dye Well.*

It remains onely, that the Truly Devout and Loyal Perſons in our Nation that are of the *Roman* Perſuaſion, will but vouchſafe to take the Courage and Pains following Our Bleſſed Saviour's Advice, John 5. 39. *Search the Scriptures*; and S. *Paul's*, 1 Theſſ. 5. 21. *Prove all things*, 2 Cor. 13. 5. *And examine your ſelves whether you be in the Faith.*

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A POST-SCRIPT

To the *Roman* Catholicks of my Acquaintance.

Ever Honoured and ſtill Reſpected Friends,

HAving thus fairly and ingènuouſly unboſomed to you the very thoughts of my Heart, I beſeech You not to take with the *Left Hand* what I offer with the *Right*. Many of You I know to be Truly Vertuous, Noble and Loyal: to Many I have moſt Endearing Obligations; and I think none can contradict me if I affirm, That my Converſe among You was repay'd with Love and Eſteem: and I take Heaven and Earth to witneſs, that I ſtill value you as tenderly as I do my own Soul. God onely knowes how many Throes and Struglings I had to part with thoſe, whom I ſo Earneſtly affected. But Truth (at leaſt as it ſeems to me) is Great, and will prevail. My Requeſt to You All is, That You would not let us break in point of Charity, though our Opinions are not altogether Coincident: That You would, for the removing any ſcruples that may ariſe, believe me, as I ſhall anſwer at the Laſt Tribunal, That I was not onely *Sincere* but *Zealous*, while I remained among You: and that whatever I performed, was with the perfect *Intention* of, and Compliance with the *Roman* Church; and as Validly done as any Actions of that nature are capable of admitting. Laſtly, I deſire for God's, Religion's, and Your own ſake, that we may refrain from All Contumelious Reflexions on one another.

In that Long Converſe and Great Familiarity I had with you, it is impoſſible, but Failings and Imperfections muſt be diſcovered on both ſides. Let All be concealed Under the Mantle of that Charity, which hides a multitude of Sins: ſtill think of me as you ever found, One that *ſought not Yours, but You:* an honeſt, plain down-right meaning Perſon. And as for my preſent Proceedings Leave me to ſtand or fall to that Great Judge, to whoſe, and his Churche's Cenſure, I with the moſt profound Obedience Submit, whatever I Write or Do.

And Once more I recommend to your moſt impartial and ſerious Conſideration this Important Quæry: Whether it be not Sufficient Ground to withdraw from the Communion of a Church, when She is convinced publickly to *Teach*, *Practiſe* and *Command Treaſon* and *Rebellion* to its Members? *Sicut Reputari cupiunt & Haberi Fideles*, (as the *Lateran* Council Thunders it out) as they deſire to be Accounted and Treated as Chriſtians.

As to the Traiterous and Monſtrous Plot now in Queſtion; What Mr. *Oats* and Mr. *Bedlow*, with the reſt of the Informers Evidences are, I know not nor am I much Inquiſitive. His Sacred Majeſty, and his Great Council are Judges of that. But of this I am as ſure as I can be of any humane Tranſaction, That the *Roman* Church *Teaches* and *Commands* ſuch Practices; That they have been frequently

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put in Execution abroad and especially at Home: And that consequent to such Doctrines, Mr. *Coleman* by his own Confession, and Letters which he did not deny, was very Busie in attempting to Dissolve the Parliament, and in procuring Assistance from the *French* King, by the interposition of Monsieur *le Chese* the Jesuit, who was that King's Confessor: (to use his own words) 'To Carry on the 'Mighty Work in their hands, no less than the Conversion of Three Kingdoms, 'and the Utter Subduing of a Pestilential Heresie, which hath Domineer'd over 'a great part of this Northern World a long time; and that there never was such 'hopes of success since the days of their Q. *Mary*, as now in These days,——' And I am sure, that a most *Worthy Justice of Peace* was Barbarously Murder'd, who took the Examinations upon that occasion; and that many other Insolent Actions were committed by that Party. Nor can it be any satisfaction to the Nation for well-minded Persons to say they *Disclaim* and *Detest* such *Actions*; unless they *Renounce* the *Principles*, and *Disown* the *Authority* which have promoted and still are ready to prompt men to such Desperate Practices. God Almighty grant Us All his Grace to Consider in This Our Day the Things that Belong to Our Peace, before they be Hid from Our Eyes. *Amen.*

FINIS.

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